

# Solihull College & University Centre

## Corporation Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024  
5.00pm -8.00pm Blossomfield Campus.

<b>Present</b>	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 Tony Lucas – Joint Vice Chair of Corporation Mehreen Mirza Jo Moorcroft - HE Student Governor Amirun Nehar Cheryl Pidler Donna Poole – Staff Governor Sally Tomlinson Harrison Thompson
<b>In Attendance</b>	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)
<b>Apologies</b>	Lucy Lee

### 1. Welcome and any announcements.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### 2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Lucy Lee.

### 3. Declarations of Interest

There were no items declared.

### 4. Membership Update

The following membership updates were confirmed:

- Sally Tomlinson has resigned and will cease to be a Full Member effective 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024.
- Barbara Hughes' second term of office comes to an end on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024, and she will step down from the role as Chair of the Corporation.
- The Corporation is recruiting for the role of Chair Designate to commence with immediate effect. The successful candidate will work alongside the Chair for a full handover, and it is proposed that they will commence in the role of Chair of Corporation effective 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025.
- Lucy Lee's second term of office will end 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024 and she will cease to be a Full Member and Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee with effect from this date.
- A Vice-Chair vacancy requires filling with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024. Governors of the A&R committee were asked to nominate themselves. The Director of Corporate

Governance Risk & Compliance confirmed she was in discussions with a governor who may be interested in the role.

The following membership updates were **ratified** by the Corporation.

- Following the recommendation made by the A&R committee Amirun Nehar is appointed the Chair of the A&R committee effective 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024.
- Cheryl Pidler is appointed to the Search & Governance committee with immediate effect.
- Ravi Kumr has been appointed the Skills Link Governor effective 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

## 5. Minutes of the previous Corporation meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024

The previous minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024 were received and **APPROVED** as a true record. The Chair's signature will be added to the minutes.

### 5.1 Matters Arising

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

### 5.2 Action Report

The actions were reviewed, and an update was provided. Actions 4, 8, 9 and 11 were confirmed **closed**.

Action 15 - governors were reminded to express their interest in how they would like to link up with Cheshire South & West College. The Deputy Principal and CFO will attend their Finance & Resources committee on 21<sup>st</sup> March and Tony Lucas – Vice Chair will attend their Full Corporation meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> March. The item was confirmed as closed.

### 5.3 Top Risks

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

**In response to a governor's question**, discussions took place regarding whether the college had seen an increase in cyber-attacks following recent public events. It was noted there has been a general increase in the education section and that direct action response helps to identify any risks to the college. The Chair explained the Cyber Presentation which was shared by the Director of IT at the A&R committee confirmed there were 151 targeted attacks in the education section. **In response to the suggestions made**, it was agreed that an up-to-date report on the number of attacks on colleges and the specific attempts on our systems should be presented at the next meeting to show how the college manages the threat response. **ACTION**

The top risks were **NOTED**.

## 6. Committee Minutes for Information

The minutes of the Audit & Risk committee meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024 were not available and will be circulated at the next meeting. **ACTION**

The Vice-Chair of the Audit & Risk committee gave feedback on items which were discussed during the meeting.

## 7. Chairs Action & Update

The Chairs action approving the Animal Care T Level Centre was shared and **ratified**.

## 8. Principal's Introduction & Update Report

The Principal and CEO's report was circulated prior to the meeting and provided governors with a mid-term update on key areas of the college. The context of the report focused primarily on students, their voice, their experience, and the skills the college is developing in them. A detailed explanation of the key points was given.

In connection with the update regarding the additional teaching hours for Maths and English, discussions took place regarding the difficulties filling the additional hours due to the gaps in teaching staff within the sector.

A copy of the report in connection with the DfE annual strategic conversation will be circulated once it has been completed. **ACTION**

It was advised that PD coaches are funded by a catch-up fund from covid recovery which combines funded coaches with current practices. **Following a question from the Chair**, it was confirmed that the new structures will commence in the new academic year.

Governors asked questions concerning whether feedback was received from the unsuccessful JLR bid and an update was provided.

Questions were asked whether it is clear why there is variation of overall applications and why some subjects are up or down. It was noted the possibility could be linked to postcode and the impact of the college's competitors and that trends were shared across all college groups. An explanation was given concerning why applications decreased within Creative & Foundation. **In response to a question**, it was noted that although the college is not recognised as a 6<sup>th</sup> form college, A Levels are being delivered from September 2024.

An update was provided on the number of responses received following the pulse survey and governors were advised that a review of the feedback will take place after the easter break. A headline and summary of the findings will be presented at the next corporation meeting in May. **ACTION**

**In response to a question from the Chair**, the Principal and CEO provided a detailed and confidential update regarding teaching feedback in connection with how to improve processes at the college. Governors were asked to refer to the Focus Group Feedback update under item 10c which provided further feedback. The Chair reminded governors that the Principal's weekly newsletter listed the culture feedback workshops which governors were able to attend.

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

## 9. Governor's review of the Annual Accountability Statement 23/24

A review of the Accountability Statement 2023 took place to enable the creation and submission timeline for Annual Accountability Statement for 2024. The Vice Principal Business Growth, Skills & Partnerships summarised the college's actions to date.

Governors were advised a copy of the Employer Links brochure will be circulated for information. It was noted that the brochure detailed a review of haulage and distribution, and assessment of skills needs to evaluate how the much the college can support. **ACTION**

Feedback received was positive and in-depth discussions took place regarding the future revisions in the next statement. The Chair commented on attendance with L3 students in Computing which was detailed within the QiP and asked governors to consider how to correlate the two together.

***PA& ST joined the meeting.***

**A governor commented** on the issues regarding the engineer's shortage to install charging points and asked how the college were supporting it. Questions were asked regarding how the Corporation could determine whether they were doing enough to ensure the measures were being met within the accountability agreement.

Detailed discussions took place in connection with having more measurable targets in the new timeframe with qualitative evidence on how they sit with the strategic plan and what we want to achieve. The Vice Principal Business Growth, Skills & Partnerships explained that all quantitative information is around provision and not outcomes. The new statement is a collaboration of everything and where we want it to be in line with our strategic plan which feeds into our skills judgement.

Governors were invited to volunteer to attend a separate meeting to review the draft accountability agreement before it is submitted to Corporation in May. **ACTION**

With there being no further discussion, the Corporation **AGREED** the action plan and timeframes suggested.

## 10. Quality, Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

### 10a Quality Improvement Plan (QiP) 2023/24

The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum presented the 2023/24 QiP mid spring update informing of the latest updates which have been made. He explained that there were some IT issues with the governor's dashboard linked to the reporting systems which has since been resolved, noting that the college are still 1% above target. Context was given regarding the retention rate and how that impacted on pass achievement data. A detailed explanation was provided to ways in which the progress updates were being monitored.

***The meeting recommenced after a break for food and prayer. RK joined the meeting and MF left the meeting.***

Detailed discussions took place regarding the latest updates within the QiP.

**The Chair commented** that it was good to see progress has been made and expressed concern connected to attendance in English and Maths. Questions were asked regarding progress made within Construction and Built Environment and the forecast achievement rates so that governors felt assured progress was being made. The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum updated governors on the feedback received following a recent deep-dive meeting which recognised areas of concern and a detailed explanation was given regarding how risks will be mitigated.

**A governor challenged** why actions were not taken sooner when it showed a gradual decline over previous years. In-dept discussions took place regarding challenges made based on the previous year's SAR and current QiP. The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum assured governors he felt confident the steps taken to make improvements will secure achievement rates by the end of the academic year. He further confirmed meetings with the Quality Director and Quality Co-ordinator regularly took place which measured whether they were on track to ensure the key measures were being met for each school.

**Questions and concerns were raised** concerning the focus group feedback as to why some issues were not brought to the attention of the Corporation earlier. In-depth challenges took place regarding the feedback from teaching staff, and it was resolved that feedback on quality will be presented at the next Corporation meeting in June to allow for enough time to gather information due to the easter holidays. **ACTION**

Discussions took place regarding T Levels and retention rates. A confidential and anonymous update was given regarding the performance management of a member of staff, and governors were advised the relevant steps were being taken.

The Chair summarised that the Corporation felt confident there were improvements being made to the current QiP and that governors felt assured that positive improvements were being made.

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

#### 10b Quality Report – Term Two

The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum introduced the Quality report which provided a review of the quality performance of individual schools. He provided an update on the risk areas where there is a fall in quality and advised the college commissioned a deep dive in his area with an Ofsted inspector to support these areas.

The Chair proposed that the termly quality reports should replace the teaching learning and assessment section on the Governors dashboard, which was **AGREED** by the Corporation.  
**ACTION**

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

#### 10c Focus Group Feedback

The report provided feedback and clarification on questions raised in the Governor Focus Groups. The report was **NOTED for information, understanding and decision making by governors.**

### **11. Bids and Projects Report (Motor Vehicle)**

The Vice Principal for Business Growth, Skills, and Partnerships provided an update on bids and projects and provided a detailed explanation to the report. The following items were shared for information:

- Appendix 1 - Current bids and projects in progress £100k+
- Appendix 2 - SDC MV EV Extension grant
- Appendix 3 - Bids and Projects termly report.

The Corporation unanimously **APPROVED** the application of a £625K UKSDF grant awarded by Stratford District Council and agreed to a contribution of £129K from college funds to fund the balance of the equipment costs. The approval did not include Student Governors who are not eligible to vote on financial matters.

### **12. Sub-contracting Strategy (WMCA)**

The Vice Principal for Business Growth, Skills, and Partnerships presented the sub-contracting termly update and noted that the request was to approve the AEB subcontracting plan 2024/25 onwards and approval to tender for WMCA AEB subcontracting work.

With there being no comments or questions, the Corporation **APPROVED** the 2024/25 AEB subcontracting plan and approval to tender for a subcontract to deliver WMCA AEB of up to £1,500,000 income per annum.

### **13. Equality and Diversity and Policy Review**

The College's Equality policy was received for information; it was **NOTED** there were no amendments required.

A copy of the EDI Annual Report was shared, governors were asked to review it and provide feedback outside of the meeting. An update regarding the feedback received will be confirmed at the next meeting. **ACTION**

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

#### **14. Employment Contract Approval – Apprenticeships (for staff who are apprentices)**

The draft Contract of Employment for Apprentices (staff who are apprentices) was received and **APPROVED.**

#### **15. IT Update (verbal)**

The Deputy Principal and CFO confirmed that an update on Digital Strategy will be presented at the next meeting in May. It was proposed to move from termly to an annual update and governors were fully in support and gave thanks to Harrison Thompson and Ravi Kumar for this assistance reviewing the Digital Strategy. **ACTION**

#### **16. Property Update**

The Deputy Principal and CFO provided an update on property issues. The Corporation **APPROVED** the following items:

1. Approval of the sale of the student residences on the Stratford-upon-Avon Campus BPG New Town Limited for £4m.
2. Approval of the expenditure on K block roof and fire doors as outlined in the report.

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

#### **17. Investment Plan Presentation**

An update was given, and a copy of the presentation will be uploaded to BoardEffect for information. **ACTION**

#### **18. Governance Internal and External Audit Contract**

The Director of Corporate Governance, Risk and Compliance provided a summary report of the Internal and External Audit contract approval process.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the recommendation from A&R committee to extend the contract with RSM for 2 years. Independence of the Head of Internal Audit was discussed, and it was **agreed** to continue from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the recommendation to go out to tender for the External Audit contract.

#### **19. Governance Items**

Feedback from Governors Development Morning was given, governors were thanked for providing their feedback which will be used for ideas on briefings and the next GDM.

An update on the Cheshire College Partnership was discussed under item 5.2.

#### **20. Confidential**

There were no confidential items discussed.

#### **21. Policies**

The Value for Money policy was circulated and **APPROVED.**

The EDI Policy was discussed and **APPROVED** until item 13.

#### **22. Items for Information**

The PMR was not circulated and would be uploaded to the governor's dashboard for information. **ACTION**

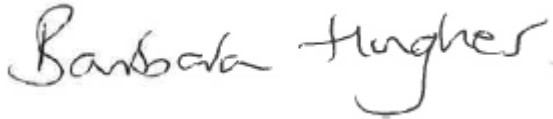
#### **23. Any Other Business**

There were no items discussed.

#### **24. Future Dates**

- Thursday 23/05/2024 5pm – Stratford Campus
- Additional FoG – W/C 20/05/24 Date TBC
- FoG – Tuesday 24/6/2023 4pm – Teams.
- 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*



**Signed:**

**Dated: 23/05/2024**