

# Solihull College & University Centre

## Corporation Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2024  
5.00pm -8.15pm Blossomfield Campus.

<b>Present</b>	Barbara Hughes – Chair of Corporation Paul Assinder – Joint Vice Chair of Corporation Christine Abbott Sarah Horton-Walsh Mehak Farooque - FE Student Governor Rebecca Gater – Principal & CEO Lucy Lee Tony Lucas – Joint Vice Chair of Corporation Mehreen Mirza Amirun Nehar Donna Poole – Staff Governor Sally Tomlinson
<b>In Attendance</b>	Heather Hunt – Deputy Principal and CFO, Pete Haynes – Vice Principal HR & Student Services, Nancy Buckley - Vice Principal Business Growth, Skills & Partnerships, Sam Bromwich – Director of Corporate Governance, Risk & Compliance, Lee Jamieson – Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum, Tina Taylor – Senior Governance Officer (minute taker), Claudine Barnes – Head of HE & Research, Linda McLaughlin – Assistant Principal Quality and Innovation, Gita Gorman – Director of Finance
<b>Apologies</b>	Tasleem Chaudary, Cheryl Pidler, Jo Moorcroft – HE Student Governor Harrison Thompson and Ravi Kumar.

### 1. Welcome and Announcements

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. A special welcome to the Assistant Principal Quality and Innovation was made, who was attending as part of her development. The Chair informed that she was the nominee for the recent Ofsted visit and gave thanks for her support and hard work.

### 2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cheryl Pidler, Tasleem Chaudary, and Jo Moorcroft - HE Student Governor, Harrison Thompson and Ravi Kumar.

### 3. Declarations of Interest

The Principal and CEO declared an interest as the Director of the GBS Institute of Technology (GBSIoT).

### 4. Minutes and Actions Log of the Previous Corporation Meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024

The Chair explained that due to the timings of the recent Ofsted visit, the minutes and action log from the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024 were not available and would be shared at the next meeting. **ACTION**

#### 4.3 Top Risks

The key top risks were discussed. The proposal to remove risk number 1 following the positive Ofsted outcome was **approved**. The Chair of the Audit & Risk committee confirmed it was also a recommendation from the committee following their discussions. **ACTION**

## 5. Committee Minutes

The minutes for the following meetings were not available and will be circulated at the next meeting: **ACTION**

- Remuneration Committee (07.05.2024)
- Audit & Risk Committee (18.06.2024)
- Financial Oversight Group (05.06.2024 & 24.06.2024)

## 6. Membership Update

The Corporation received recommendations from the Search & Governance Committee for new appointments effective 1st September 2024. Items 6.3 and 6.4 relating to the successful Student Governor interviews were not shared with current Student Governors due to confidentiality.

### **APPROVED Appointments:**

- Helen Kinghorn – Full Member
- Juliet Morgan – Full Member
- Megan Bacalla – FE Student Governor
- Liam Edwards – HE Student Governor
- Paul Assinder – Chair Designate

### **APPROVED Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2024/25:**

The Director of Corporate Governance, Risk & Compliance confirmed that in line with the Articles of Association, the Corporation must re-elect the Chair of Corporation and Vice-Chair. The Chair and Vice Chair left the meeting whilst the item was discussed, and it was agreed that:

- Barbara Hughes – re-elected as Chair of Corporation until 31st December 2024 because of the end of Term of Office.
- Tony Lucas – re-elected as Vice-Chair of Corporation and Chair of Remuneration Committee.

### **APPROVED Chair Designate/Chair of Corporation**

Following a detailed recruitment process **Paul Assinder** is appointed Chair Designate effective 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024. The appointment details are confirmed below:

- The appointment is effective 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024 for a term of office of 4 years ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2028.
- Appointment of Chair Designate of the Corporation is with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024 for a period of 4 months until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 to enable a full handover.
- Appointment of Chair of Corporation with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025 which will continue for the remainder of the 4-year term of office until 31<sup>st</sup> August 2028.

## 7. Principal's Introduction & Update Report

The Principal and CEO provided a thorough overview of the report. Solihull College & University Centre received an excellent inspection report from Ofsted and are the only general FE college in the West Midlands to receive the 'strong' judgement for the skills element.

Following an update about the Staff Development Day, “#Cultivate”, the Staff Governor provided feedback on the day noting that staff were positive about the day. Positive feedback was received from staff and updates on the “happy” leadership training for middle managers were noted. **Following a question from a governor** it was noted the impact of “happy training” will be measured before and after implementation. The Deputy Principal and CFO gave an update on capital projects and bespoke “happy training” programme.

**A governor requested** hard copies of the Curriculum Strategy 2024 for visitors. **ACTION**

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

### **7.1 Annual Accountability Statement 2024/25**

The draft Annual Accountability Statement was shared, the Vice Principal Business Growth, Skills & Partnerships drew particular attention to the areas in green. Thanks were given to the Skills Link Governor who had helped draft the final version for governors.

Governors **APPROVED** the final draft of the College’s Annual Accountability Statement and Local Needs Duty 2024/25. A final version will be uploaded to DfE website by 30th June 2024 and college website by 31st December 2024. **ACTION**

## **8. Quality & Curriculum Update**

The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum provided a thorough overview of the reports.

### **8.1 Ofsted Inspection Report**

An overview of positive feedback and areas for improvement were received and areas to be provided are detailed within the Quality Improvement Plan (QiP). **Following a question from the Chair**, assurance was given about improving attendance for students with high needs and governors were informed there are high expectation for all students. Discussions took place about high needs and how they can be linked to the feedback received in the report.

**The Chair commented** that the outcome of Ofsted would have a positive impact on staff morale. She went on to say it’s a huge achievement for the college and congratulated everyone involved paying particular attention to the Assistant Principal Quality and Innovation who was the nominee. In response, the Assistant Principal Quality and Innovation commented on her experience of being nominated noting the team worked well together and that she felt prepared and supported in the role.

**Following a question from a governor**, the Assistant Principal Quality and Innovation explained how it altered the provision of quality within the role.

Detailed discussions took place regarding how the college could work towards achieving an “outstanding” outcome for the future and governors were advised about the action plan detailed within the QiP. Following positive feedback received from governors regarding the outcome of Ofsted, the Principal and CEO confirmed that all staff were being informed of the feedback at the Staff Development Day.

### **8.2 Quality Report Term Three:**

The report provided a review of the quality and performance of individual schools. Governors were asked to note the contents of the Quality Report and were encouraged to use the information when they next participate in learning visits and focus groups.

Detailed discussions took place regarding the source identifier, and it was noted attendance is tracked daily. Governors can see live data on attendance through the governor's dashboard.

### **8.3 Quality Improvement Plan (QiP) 23/24 June update**

Governors were asked to note the contents of the QiP, which will be reviewed regularly throughout the year. Latest updates were being published on the governor's portal in August.

#### **ACTION**

### **8.4 Achievement Rates 2022-2023:**

The report showed provider achievement data for 2022/23 which was released in March 2024. This report ranked the performance of Solihull College & University Centre against 12 key competitor GFE (general further education) providers in the region for class-based learning, apprenticeships and by SSA (subject sector area).

The college ranked 5th for Education and Training and 4th for Apprenticeships among regional competitors.

### **8.5 Student Satisfaction Survey**

The report provided governors with a summary of the Spring Satisfaction Survey results for both work-based and class-based learners. The results from every question were available on the Governor Dashboard and included in the Student Satisfaction Survey and Survey Comparison linked documents.

### **8.6 RFQ Exam Results Report**

The report showed positive indicators of progress. The college received exam results for L3 RQF qualifications from the January Exam Series which shows results are a good indicator of progress towards final achievement.

The reports were **NOTED for information, understanding and decision making by governors.**

### **8.7 Curriculum Management Areas – CONFIDENTIAL**

Discussions took place under item 15.

## **9. Approval of Access and Participation Plan (APP)**

The Head of HE & Research joined the meeting for the item.

She presented the APP (Access and Participation Plan) noting it is a 4-year plan which sets out how we will improve equality of opportunity for students from disadvantaged backgrounds to access, succeed in, and progress from higher education.

Governors were asked to approve the content of the report to allow submission to the Office for Students (OfS) deadline of 31st July 2024.

There were challenging discussions regarding the content of the report. The Chair noted the importance of HE provisions which are funded and regulated by Office for Students (OfS) and emphasised the importance of approving the APP. Clarification on the Financial Summary of Sub-contracted provision was provided.

It was noted that not all governors were able to access the report on BoardEffect and the Chair agreed that the APP would be made available to governors outside of the meeting. Governors were satisfied with their understanding of the APP and that it was approved at the meeting. **ACTION**

## 10. Sub-Contracting Termly – WMCA Contract Award

The report provided a termly update on subcontracted provision and a summary of our sub-contracting position 2024/25. Governors were asked to approve the award of the WMCA AEB Subcontract 24/25-26/27 for £1.2m (£1.5m funding) pa to RMF.

Governors were given assurance that the appropriate procurement process had been followed prior to agreeing the subcontract.

With there being no questions or comments, governors **APPROVED** the award of the sub-contractor for WMCA/AEB provision to RMF. The value of this contract will be up to £1,200,000 per year for each of the 3 years with an option to extend for a further 2 years (which represents up to £1,500,000 of AEB funding.)

## 11. GBS Institute of Technology (GBSlOT) Termly Report and Collaboration Agreement

An update was given on GBSIoT; the following items were received for information:

- DfE Relicensing letter
- GBSIoT Strategic Plan
- GBSIoT Business Plan
- Board Minutes – appointment of Chair of the Board
- GBSIoT Financial Regulations
- GBSIoT Draft Collaboration Agreement
- GBSIoT Financial Statements/Annual Accounts
- KPI Targets and Tracker

The GBSIoT Decision Making – Legal Advice was received as a linked document and **NOTED** for information.

The Chair commented on some minor updates to be made to the draft Collaboration Agreement before it is approved in October Corporation. **ACTION**.

Discussions took place regarding whether there was value for money within the collaboration agreement.

The reports were **NOTED for information, understanding and decision making by governors**.

## 12. Finance Feedback

*The Director of Finance joined the meeting.*

### 12.1 Feedback from the Financial Oversight Group (FoG)

The Chair of the Financial Oversight Group gave feedback following the recent meeting. He noted that the FoG had reviewed in detail the information within the presentation under item 12.2 and had reviewed the budget for 2024/25 and 2025/26 paying particular attention to the core assumptions. Governors reviewed some of the modelling and were satisfied with the mitigation strategy. Discussions took place regarding the contribution of faculties and contributions for the year, and an update was given on the impressive contribution rate.

Discussions regarding pay award were discussed as a confidential item under item 15.

## 12.2 Finance Presentation Budget 2024/2025

The Deputy Principal and CFO presented in detail the budget for 2024/25. The update was **NOTED for information, understanding and decision making by governors.**

### CFFR College Finance Forecasting Return 2023-26

The draft Budget 2023/24 and Financial Plan 2023/24 and 2025/26 was presented and **APPROVED.** Governors received for information the following items:

- Student numbers
- Financial Plan Commentary
- Financial Plan figures (CFFR)
- Cashflows
- April PMR

Governors **APPROVED** the College Financial Forecasting Return (CFFR) and confirmed they support the College's strategic objectives.

## 12.3 Contributions Analysis 2023/24 Forecast Outturn and 2024/25 Budget

The report provided an update by faculty and school, governors were advised about positive engagement from Heads of Schools in relation to budget discussions.

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

The following recommendations from the Audit & Risk committee were received and **APPROVED**

1. RSM Internal Audit Plan 2024/25
2. Bishop Fleming's Audit Plan
3. Strategic Risk Register 2024/25

## 13. Financial Regulations

The item was deferred to October. **ACTION**

## 14. Governance Items

The Director of Corporate Governance, Risk & Compliance presented her update on the key points.

### 14.1 Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2024/25

Detailed under item 6.

### 14.2 Terms of Reference Financial Oversight Group (FoG)

The item was deferred to the October Corporation meeting **ACTION**

### 14.3 Self-Assessment/Exit Interviews

Governors were reminded to book a self-assessment meeting if not done so already and exit interviews for governors who were leaving would take place before the end of July.

### 14.4 Governors Induction

An induction programme for the newly appointed governors has been scheduled to start in September. The governance team will be in touch with governors regarding their governor involvement and mentor support.

#### **14.5 Annual Cycle of Business (CoB)**

The final Annual CoB will be submitted to governors for information before the end of the academic year. **ACTION**

#### **15. Confidential Items**

**CONFIDENTIAL ITEM – NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

#### **16. Policies**

The following policies were circulated prior to the meeting and an explication to each was provided:

- Tuition Fee Policies
- Health & Safety Policy

A copy of the fees for 2024/25 and 2025/26 were also shared. Clarification was given regarding the fees. With there being no comments, the policies were **APPROVED**.

#### **17. Items for Information**

The following reports were shared for information:

- Bids and Projects Termly Report
- Tender Update
- Freedom of Information Report 2023/24
- Health & Safety Termly Report

The reports were **NOTED for information, understanding and decision making by governors**

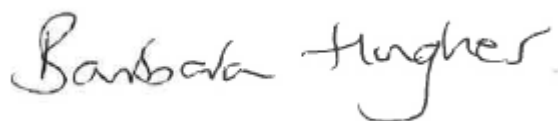
#### **18. Any Other Business**

The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum advised of the focus on the quality improvement plan and SAR validation panels scheduled for the new academic year. Governors will receive invites to attend the meetings.

#### **19. Future Dates**

- **Governor Development Day:** Saturday, 28th September 2024, 9am-1pm, Blossomfield Campus
- **S&G Committee:** Tuesday, 1st October 2024, 5.30pm Teams
- **Corporation Meeting:** Tuesday, 8th October 2024, 4pm at Blossomfield Campus

The Chair thanked everyone for their time, and the meeting ended at 7.15pm.



**Signed:**

**Dated: 08.10.2024**

---