

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 10 JULY 2024 IN THE
CONFERENCE ROOM AT BRINSBURY COLLEGE**



Chichester
College
Group

Present:

Chris Bennett, Dr Roy Bowden, Steve Cooper (Vice Chair), Andrew Green (CEO), David Jones, Helen Kilpatrick CB (Chair), Paul Lansdowne (Staff Governor), Richard Moore, Dr James Sarmecanic, Steven Skinner, Nick Sutherland

In Attendance:

Sally Challis-Manning MBE (Principal of Brinsbury/Crawley & Deputy Executive Principal), Steve Coulthard (CFO), Vicki Illingworth (Executive Principal), Helen Loftus (Principal, Chichester College), Paul Riley (Principal, Brighton MET and Haywards Heath College), Jon Rollings (COO), Catherine Vinall (Clerk to the Corporation), Sarah Box (Governance Officer)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

134. The Chair welcomed members to Corporation meeting.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

135. Apologies for absence had been received from Tosin Adebisi, Kam Baines, Steve Bassam, Elly Claridge (Student Governor), Gayathri Ganesan, Lauri House (Student Governor), Tom Simmonds and Paul Wright

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

136. The Chair drew the attention of Governors and those in attendance at the meeting to the requirement to declare any interests they might have in any of the items on the agenda, as detailed on the agenda sheet.

MINUTES

137. The Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation on Wednesday 27 March and Tuesday 14 May 2024 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

MATTERS ARISING

138. The matters arising were all confirmed as complete or in progress.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S TERMLY REPORT

139. Andrew Green gave a presentation to provide an update on FE sector developments and key issues for Chichester College Group.
140. Following Labour's general election win the previous week, Andrew gave an overview of the potential changes the new government might bring. The manifesto had promised "a comprehensive strategy" to "better integrate" further and higher education. A new body would be created, Skills England, which was expected to bring together businesses, training providers and unions with regional and national government. It was noted that the Government's manifesto had not mentioned a pause or review of the BTEC defunding scheme.
141. Other aspects were discussed, such as the Advanced British Standard and Lifelong learning entitlement. The implications for the state sector of applying VAT to private schools were considered. It was possible that Colleges of specialist technical excellence would be created, although there was little detail available at present about how these might work. Ofsted reform had been included in the party's manifesto and Governors were advised that it was likely that a new education inspection framework would be introduced, with the removal of the current headline grade.
142. It was explained that the AoC had produced a briefing pack for new ministers, with some urgent asks, including the pause and review of qualifications reform, funding to match any pay increase given to schools and funding for 16-18 in-year growth. In addition, there were other, longer term asks and these included the suspension of new Maths and English condition of funding whilst a wider curriculum and assessment review took place, consideration of the VAT position for colleges, LGPS guarantee and a reduction of bureaucracy on 16-18 bursaries. In response to a query on the increase in the number of new sixth form colleges being opened, Andrew confirmed that nationally there was a need for area reviews of the sector to avoid market saturation. CCG were addressing the issue locally in Worthing and a meeting with the local 16-18 commissioner would take place over the summer.
143. In terms of challenges for CCG, financial performance continued to be an area for focus. Other challenges discussed earlier in the year such as staff recruitment and retention, cash flow and apprenticeship completions had reduced in terms of their risk rating. The issues that continued to be closely monitored were maths and English achievement, cyber security, mental health, staff workload and morale (linked to pay award), HE recruitment, EBITDA, Anglia and International income and ongoing maintenance of buildings. Andrew highlighted new challenges facing the Group, including new Government policy changes, the Broadwater closure and moves, the anticipated Ofsted inspection and new local school sixth form provision.

Emerging opportunities were noted as commercial growth, curriculum visioning, improved contribution and financial position, growth in 16-18 and immersive spaces and investment in technology.

Strategic Plan - Summer Term Monitoring Success Measures

144. The success measures against each strategic objective were noted. With the Strategic Plan in its first year, the current indicators were as expected and more work would continue to consolidate and ensure that objectives were met. It was confirmed that each Committee would review the relevant success measures and reports would be submitted to Corporation each term.

CHICHESTER COLLEGE GROUP PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023/24

Update From the Curriculum & Quality Committee Meetings

145. The summary reports from the termly Curriculum and Quality meetings were received. There was a discussion on the logistics and complexity of delivery Maths and English to such a large number of students with no additional funding. It was explained that, due to the volume of students taking English and Maths at GCSE, all staff were involved in the examination process, and it was necessary to close campuses on exam days to ensure that rooms were available for exams. An English & Maths strategy group had been set up to share best practice and focus on the key issues across the College Group. The policy of resits and the effect on student resilience and confidence was discussed by the Corporation. It was acknowledged that a maths and English vocational qualification would be the best option for many students, rather than repeated GCSE retakes. However, this would also require a systemic change, as employers would need to adjust qualification requirements for jobs.

Update on the Performance of Teaching and Learning in 2023/24

146. The CCG Summer Performance Report was received, and Vicki Illingworth noted a positive set of figures, which were strong against sector averages. Retention was 2.7pp above the national average for 16-18 classroom based learners and 4.6pp above the national average for 19+ learners. 16-18 achievement was predicted at 4.7pp above the national average and 1% above the national average for 19+. EDI indicators were also showing strong performance, and Governors noted the data on EHCPs with 3,000 students being supported with differentiated learning and this illustrated the Group's inclusive approach. The team were mindful of Ofsted's potential interest in Children Looked After, disadvantaged and high needs students, however it was important that all groups were fully supported.

147. There had been a focus on both the quality and performance of apprenticeships, ensuring that students were supported to complete their End Point Assessments. In addition, there had been a great deal of work to reduce the number of learners who were past their planned end date. As a

result, the latest figures were showing predicted achievement for apprenticeships sitting at 10% above the national average.

148. Vicki noted that there were continuing areas of focus for teaching and learning which included:

- Supporting courses in the intensive care process to ensure that there was targeted support and positive impact on student outcomes.
- Attendance - attendance strategies had been put in place across the group and best practice had been shared. Next year, the team would be focusing on engagement with learning.
- Maths and English
- Equality and Diversity - the data would be reviewed in granular detail at course level in each college, again to ensure the best possible outcomes for all students.

149. Governors were pleased to see the improving trajectory for overall achievement and requested that this data was also provided by college and cohort.

Action:

Add cohort information to college achievement data.

COMMITTEE UPDATES AND ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Management Accounts to 31 May 2024.

150. Steve Coulthard presented the latest set of management accounts explaining that the budget EBITDA had been £3m, but this had been downgraded to £2.2m at the mid-year reforecast due to income challenges. The forecasted May MMA position was £1.5m EBITDA with 2 months of the year left to go. There was reasonable confidence that year end position would be close to the forecast, although it was noted that it was cost and not income that was the challenge. Apprenticeships and Adult income would be met. Due to the success in filling many of the staff vacancies across the Group, there had been a negative impact on pay costs. Steve also explained that there were challenges under the central services budget and this would be tracked closely in the year ahead as there were issues with phasing. The cash position was looking more positive, although a dip in cash days would continue to be seen mid-month.

AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

Risk Management Report

151. The Corporation received the latest Risk Management Report and Chichester College Group's Risk Registers.

152. Steve Coulthard confirmed that the report showed an improving risk profile. Four risks had been downgraded from very high to high and these were influenced by a variety of factors including improved staff recruitment and retention and the current progress of the Group's major capital programmes. It was anticipated that several more would be downgraded by the next review, particularly in Governance, HE and Commercial areas.

153. There was a query on whether the committees responsible for the risks had confidence that they were being monitored effectively. It was confirmed that some areas had been the focus of recent internal audits and there had been a deep dive on cyber security at the recent Audit & Risk Committee meeting. It was

RESOLVED

That the Risk Management Report be approved.

RSM Internal Audit Plan 2024/25

154. The plan had been discussed at the most recent Audit & Risk Committee meeting. The plan had been agreed with the internal auditors and focused on compliance driven, key risk areas such as key financial controls, HE and learner numbers. It was

RESOLVED

That the RSM Internal Audit Plan 2024/25 be approved.

GOVERNANCE & SEARCH COMMITTEE

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR & VICE-CHAIR

155. Catherine Vinall confirmed the process that had taken place to appoint the next Chair and Vice Chair. As a result, the Governance & Search Committee had recommended the appointment of Steve Cooper as Chair and David Jones as Vice Chair. The Chair would have a focus on the business aspects of the role, supported by the teaching and learning expertise of the Vice-Chair. It was noted that the recommendation was for each appointment to be for three years, it was suggested that in the future, the Corporation might consider staggering the terms. It was

RESOLVED

That Steve Cooper be appointed as Chair for a three year term of office from 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2027.

That David Jones be appointed as Vice-Chair for a three year term of office from 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2027.

UPDATE FROM THE GOVERNANCE & SEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING

156. The update from Governance & Search Committee was noted and subsidiaries directorship would be picked up under AoB.

CORPORATION MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

157. Catherine Vinall confirmed that due to the ongoing turnover in membership into the next calendar year, Governance & Search Committee had recommended that a recruitment drive should start in January 2025, using a recruitment agency. In the interim and in response to FEC recommendations, it was proposed that targeted recruitment was undertaken, with a view to new appointments being made at the Corporation meeting in the autumn term. The webpages were being updated with a recruitment page to assist with this.

158. In addition, the Governance & Search Committee had recommended the re-appointment of Tosin Adebisi, until 31 March 2025. It was

RESOLVED

- a) That the re-appointment of Tosin Adebisi until 31 March 2025 was approved.
- b) That Corporation recruitment was ongoing.

CCG CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

159. Catherine Vinall explained that one of the recommendations from the recent external board review had been to establish a central Curriculum & Quality Committee (CQC). The recommendation was subsequently supported by the Corporation and separately had received support from the current College Curriculum & Quality Committee Chairs.

160. During the summer term, a report of arrangements for the new CQC, including the draft terms of reference for the Committee, had been considered at Governance & Search Committee and all of the current College CQCs and it was noted that the membership would comprise of the current governors with up to 3 co-opted members. It was

RESOLVED

That the terms of reference for the Curriculum & Quality Committee be approved.

CORPORATION SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS

161. Catherine Vinall confirmed that following the external board review, a recommendation had been made to review levels of delegation and introduce a comprehensive Schedule of Business to ensure that all governors were aware of the location of decision-making and how all matters were considered by the Board. The intended impact of the schedule of business was to simplify and focus Corporation and Committee workload and provide Governors with a clear line of sight on Committee business. It was commented that the document ensured a useful level of oversight for governors. It was

RESOLVED

That the Corporation Schedule of Business be approved.

CORPORATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

162. The Corporation's Terms of Reference had been reviewed and updated in line with suggestions from the External Board Review and an outstanding internal audit recommendation and line with the development of the Corporation schedule of business. It was

RESOLVED

That the Corporation terms of reference be approved.

REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

163. The update from the summer term Remuneration Committee meeting was received. Steve Cooper confirmed that the comparison of pay multiples had been reviewed and a discussion was held on whether the AoC senior post holder survey remained a relevant comparator.

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Update from the Resources Committee meeting

164. The Resources Committee summer term update was received, and it was confirmed that the Capital Projects update would be covered under the confidential agenda.

STUDENT COMMITTEE

165. The update from the Student Committee meeting was noted and in response to a query on how well attended the meeting was it was confirmed that a significant proportion of the student leadership teams had taken part and there had been an engaging and vibrant feel to the meeting. Governors were encouraged to join any of the future meetings.

ITEMS TO NOTE

AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

166. The Internal Audit Reports for the following areas were noted:

- Apprenticeships - Tracking and Monitoring
- Capital Projects
- Key Financial Controls
- FE Funding Rule Compliance
- Commercial Income
- Internal Audit Follow Up Report

167. Roy Bowden explained that the Audit & Risk Committee had discussed each report during the meeting. A discussion was held on the progress assessment noted in the Follow Up report. It was confirmed that this was being reviewed by the Internal Auditors as many of the actions had been partly implemented. It was noted that the report had highlighted the need for the setting of more realistic target dates and a more robust internal prioritisation and follow up process.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

168. The dates of future meetings were confirmed as follows:

- **Special Corporation Meeting**
Thursday 25 July 2024, 3pm-5pm, at Chichester College and via Teams.
- **Corporation Meeting and Development/Strategy Event**
Tuesday 15 October 2024 2pm-5pm, location TBC
- **Corporation Meeting followed by Christmas Dinner**
Wednesday 11 December 2024, 4pm-6pm, Chichester College

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Anglia Board Directorships

169. Catherine Vinall confirmed that the Anglia Examinations Board had been looking to recruit another director and Governance & Search had recommended that Tom Simmonds be appointed.

RESOLVED

That Tom Simmonds be appointed as an Anglia Examinations Board member.

Corporation Chair

170. Andrew Green expressed his thanks to Helen Kilpatrick for chairing the Corporation so expertly since the GB MET merger. It was confirmed that there would be an official thank you to Helen and Paul Wright at the Special Meeting on the 25 July. Sally Challis-Manning was also thanked for her service to the College group over many years and Governors wished her the best of luck in her new role. It was

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

It was

RESOLVED

That in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the minutes for the remainder of the meeting be recorded on a confidential basis.