

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2024 IN THE
EXHIBITION HALL AT WORTHING COLLEGE**



Chichester
College
Group

Present:

Steve Bassam, Dr Roy Bowden, Steve Cooper (Chair), Andrew Green (CEO), David Jones (Vice Chair), Paul Lansdowne (Staff Governor), Richard Moore, Dr James Sarmecanic, Tom Simmonds, Steven Skinner.

In Attendance:

Steve Coulthard (CFO), Vicki Illingworth (Executive Principal), Helen Loftus (Principal, Chichester College), Dan Power (CCO), Paul Riley (Principal, Brighton MET and Haywards Heath College), Jon Rollings (COO), Helena Thomas (Principal, Northbrook College and Worthing College), Catherine Vinall (Clerk to the Corporation), Sarah Box (Governance Officer)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

215. The Chair welcomed members to Corporation meeting.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

216. Apologies for absence had been received from Chris Bennett, Elly Claridge (Student Governor), Gayathri Ganesan, Helen Kilpatrick CB and Nick Sutherland

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

217. 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

218. The Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation on Wednesday 10 July 2024 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

MATTERS ARISING

219. The matters arising were all confirmed as in progress.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S SECTOR UPDATE

220. Andrew Green gave a presentation to provide an update on FE sector developments and key issues for Chichester College Group. Two new bills had been introduced which would have an impact on the FE sector. The first would transfer the powers of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) to the Department for Education (DfE) in order to clear the way for the establishment of Skills England and the second was the Employment Rights Bill which aimed to strengthen workers' rights.
221. In terms of curriculum and qualification review, the new government had announced a curriculum and assessment review, a review of Level 3 qualification defunding, proposals for new foundation apprenticeships and plans to reform the apprenticeship levy. It was also hoped that the government would look at the planned conditions of funding to be introduced for maths and English. In response to a query on the defunding of Level 3 courses, it was confirmed that there were currently no timescales attached to the review.
222. In terms of the maths and English review that was currently underway, Governors were advised that the AOC and colleges had contributed a paper to the reconvened DfE English and Maths group which was considering the additional condition of funding due to be introduced from September 2025. In addition, and based on feedback to a recent survey, the AOC had recommended that the DfE pause the minimum hour rule and the removal of tolerance in 2026 to avoid pre-judging the curriculum and assessment review.
223. Andrew explained that there were some key areas that still required clarity from the government. These included:
- VAT
 - Staff pay - the recently announced uplift for teachers pay did not apply to FE Colleges but had been awarded to Sixth Form Colleges.
 - Whether there would be any in-year growth funding for 16 - 18 learners.
224. In response to a question from the Corporation, Andrew confirmed that the AOC pay recommendation was for an increase of 2.5% or £750, whichever was greater. In response to a further question, Andrew confirmed that the Group was committed to the Real Living Wage, however these increases had impacted the Group's pay scales and it was planned to undertake a review of the pay scales, particularly those where the pay differential had been eroded due to Real Living Wage increases.

225. With regard to the upcoming budget, Andrew felt it was unlikely that there would be additional funding for the FE and that the sector would be looking ahead to the spending review in the spring instead.

SAFEGUARDING STUDENTS & ADULTS AT RISK

Safeguarding Students, Apprentices and Adults at Risk Policy

226. The Corporation received the revised policy and Vicki Illingworth confirmed that it had been updated in line with the 2024 Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance.

Safeguarding Annual Report 2023/24

227. The Corporation received the safeguarding annual report. In response to a query on the variances in the safeguarding as a percentage of student population data across the campuses, Vicki explained that this was affected by the student population and local communities at each site. Campuses with a higher number of students with EHCPs and Level 1 and Level 2 students generally had an increased need for support.

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS 2023/24

228. Steve Coulthard gave an overview of the year end position for 2023/24. The Budget had been set at £3m, which had then been revised to £2.2m at the mid year forecast. In terms of income, adult education had continued to be a challenge. However, significant work had been undertaken by Paul Riley and his team to deliver improvements. In addition, apprenticeships had also outperformed the forecast. The changes made to forecasting and reporting had given confidence to the monitoring process during the year.

229. Moving to cost, it was confirmed that this had not quite hit forecast, and this was due to the vacancy rate falling, although this had an upside in terms of staffing. Non-pay had been well managed and had achieved forecast.

230. A confidential minute was taken at this point.

231. Steve explained that, based on previous experience, it took a few years post-merger to stabilise finances and it seemed as though this had now been achieved. Governors commended Steve and his team on the year end position and all the hard work it had entailed.

232. In response to a query on the catch up funding, it was explained that this had been put in place post- pandemic to help students catch up on lost learning. It had been technically difficult to utilise, but had been managed as effectively as possible.

233. Governors noted that the balance sheet at year end was different to the forecast by £50m and it was confirmed that this was due to the pensions asset.

234. A confidential minute was taken at this point.

ENROLMENT 2024/25

235. The Corporation received an update on enrolments and Vicki Illingworth explained that group wide 16-19 enrolments (including 19-24 EHCPs) were currently up by 914 from the previous year. With an attrition rate of 4.5% applied there was still a positive variance of 383.

236. Enrolments at Brighton Met were reported to be up by 140. There had been a shift from L3 to Levels 1 & 2. New growth was evident in Construction L1 which linked to the local economic need. There had been growth in hospitality and demand for adult provision and ESOL. There was a significant increase in students with EHCPs and the need for LSA support was significant.

237. At Haywards Heath, numbers were 63 down against plan. There had been a lower transition rate from application to enrolment.

238. Northbrook College had increased enrolments of 189 and this increase had been particularly evident in Service Industries, Hair, Early Years, bricklaying and motor vehicle.

239. Worthing College was 67 down against the plan and this was mainly due to another sixth form college opening in the local vicinity. There had been a substantial increase in students retaking GCSE maths and English.

240. Chichester had seen an increase of 544 against the plan. Growth was evident in L1 and L2 courses across all subjects, but particularly Motor Vehicle and Construction. The number of students studying GCSE maths and English was a challenge, along with the amount of learning support that was required to support students.

241. In terms of product lines, adult skills funded course recruitment was up by just under 300 which was an increase of 3.8% across the Group with additional in year starts. Advanced learner loans were below plan by 164. Apprenticeships had seen a strong start to the year with 1,875 recruited against a plan of 1,654. It was noted that numbers could still reduce due to the 42 day window.

242. Governors were assured that work was underway to support staff who were delivering teaching to larger group sizes than expected.

243. In response to a query on international recruitment it was confirmed that there was an increase of 10% on last year's figures. Accommodation was doing well with occupancy up in both the under 18s and over 18s halls.

ITEMS TO NOTE

CCG CORPORATION AND COMMITTEE MEETING DATES 2025

244. The schedule of Corporation and Committee meeting dates for 2025 was noted.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

245. The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 11 December 2024, 4pm-6pm at Chichester College. This would be followed by Christmas Dinner in Café 19 at Chichester College.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Governor Visits

246. David Jones confirmed that he had visited Northbrook, Chichester, Brinsbury and Worthing Colleges. He noted the enthusiasm of students and the professionalism of staff. Governors were encouraged to visit campuses across the Group.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

247. 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.