

Minutes of Corporation Board – Part 1 19 October 2023

Board Members:	B Kaczmarczyk (Chair) J Battye (Joint Vice-Chair) T Campbell (Joint Vice-Chair) J Richards (Principal and CEO) H Freeman J Evans N Beldham (Staff Governor – Support)	S Martin-Standley L McKenzie J Croot L Mycroft J Hemper K Cashmore L Needham (Staff Governor – Curriculum)
Attendees:	J Shore (Head of Governance) S Cox (Head of Governance – Maternity Leave) C Acaster (AP People & Culture) J Down (AP Student Experience & Wellbeing)	H Taylor-Toone (Deputy Principal) G Varley (AP Engineering & Construction) C Godfrey (AP Academic and Professional Studies) Item 2/2324 M Greaves/B Bircumshaw/F Bunting
Apologies:	J Hemper, L McKenzie	

CH = Challenge

- 1/2324 Declarations of Interest
Members were reminded of the need to disclose an interest in any item of business to be considered at the meeting. Nothing was declared for Part 1.
- 2/2324 Staff and Student Focus - Sustainability
Michaela Greaves (Head of Teaching, Learning and Quality Improvement), Bridget Bircumshaw (Teaching and Learning Quality Lead) and Fleur Bunting, L2 student Hair and Beauty (Colour) provided an overview of the college sustainability journey being undertaken by students and staff. Governors were introduced to the Carbon Handprint activity and pledge. The college is topping the Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS) league tables across 23 countries for pledges made by educators and students (Chesterfield College Staff 1st and Chesterfield College Students 4th)
Action: HoG to forward the link to all governors to complete the activity
- 3/2324 Membership Update
The Chair welcomed new governors, Kirstie Cashmore and Jason Evans, to their first meeting. Luke Warren, Apprentice governor has resigned. On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked Luke for his contribution to the Board and wished him every success with his career.
- 4/2324 Minutes of the Previous Meeting & Matters Arising
The Part 1 minutes of the previous Corporation Board meetings held 6 July 2023 were reviewed and agreed as a true and accurate record. The review of confidential minutes is recorded under Part 2.

The action log was reviewed and there were no matters arising. Previous actions were updated and either marked as complete or carried forward as appropriate. (*Refer to Corporation Action Log – 19.10.23*)

Matters arising:

Student Union: The AP Student Experience & Wellbeing (JD) provided an update on progress with the Student Union elections.

CH: BK asked what other models of practice were being considered by the college and how other colleges secure student involvement. JD confirmed that once the Student Union has been elected, the students will be tasked with looking at this.

Chat Bot: The AP Engineering and Construction (GV) provided an update on the visit planned to Bolton College to look at Chatbot and explained that this would form part of a redesign of the digital offer across the organisation. A bid has been submitted for funding, which if successful would be worth £890k. BK stressed that it was important to work with other colleges and that a strategy would be required to look at the governance issues relating to AI in due course.

Resolution: The Board **approved** the non-confidential minutes (Part 1) of the previous meeting.

Performance Report

The AP Academic and Professional Studies (CG) provided an overview of the Performance Report and Student/Apprentice Performance Data for 2022/23. She noted that since the report was circulated, further data had been confirmed and provided the final position for classroom-based learning for 16-18 and 19+ and apprenticeships for college and LU Derby. While apprenticeships have declined, mainly due to the outcome of the apprenticeship strategic review resulting in adult health care, body and paint and hair and beauty being removed from provision which led to higher levels of withdrawals. The best case for 2023/24 is looking positive with higher numbers going through End Point Assessment and the and the new curriculum infrastructure has seen encouraging results in teams working across the curriculum/work-based areas. In depth analysis has shown that in most aspects of engineering and construction many issues were directly related to Covid.

CH: BK questioned the decline in achievement when compared to National Average and queried what actions were being taken. CG noted that 16-18 A Level grade boundaries had changed, and that some students had been taken on with lower grades than the minimum entry requirement in some subject areas. She explained that strategies have been put in place to address lessons learnt, including revised minimum entry requirements, bridging courses, marked work at an early stage and suitability boards. It was noted that there is an issue nationally relating to an Electrical Level 3 course where the exam did not meet the specification which has also impacted on achievement rates.

CH: SMS noted the strategy to increase achievement rates and questioned senior managers on how they were identifying the root cause and what actions relating to teaching learning and assessment were being taken. SMS felt that it would be useful to have some more detailed data reported to the Board. The Principal explained that the data reported to Corporation was high level data, and that more detailed data was reported to the Standards and Performance Committee and actions to address included within the Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs). Standards is due to meet to review the data in greater detail and to approve the college QIP. **Action: SMT to provide headline data for areas to improve in future Board reports.**

CH: Governors asked if the impact of the Ofsted Inspections had contributed to the achievement rates. Managers reported that there were several factors contributing to the achievements and that while there were some common factors, most related to different issues within individual courses.

English & Maths Strategy

The AP Academic and Professional Studies (CG) shared the strategy, which aims to revolutionise the way English and maths is taught through a new delivery model. The model will be supported by two new Teaching and Learning Quality Leads and the implementation of a new learning platform Century, and creating a culture of shared ownership across the English and maths and vocational teams. The risks outlined were the 37% increase in 16-18 students enrolling without a Grade 4, large class sizes and attendance issues, and issues with timetabling and staff sickness. Actions have been taken to mitigate, which includes a new Task and Finish group to urgently address the emerging concerns, additional staff support to cover lessons and the approval of two additional full-time staff. Progress is being made, with the new timetable being delivered, a new scheme of work and a new ILP to inform skills activities. It was noted that recruiting to English and maths posts was a challenge for all FE colleges.

CH: TC asked what the college was mandated to teach and what the feedback was from students. The Principal explained that the college strategy had been for the vast majority to do GCSEs. The college is now taking a more student focused approach, and if appropriate, some will be changed to Functional Skills which would be more relevant to their area of study and will allow more flexibility. Work is ongoing to contextualise GCSEs. It was noted that achievement in Functional Skills is either a Pass or Fail. The Board noted that English and maths is a challenge across the FE sector and was pleased to see the appointment of the new Teaching and Learning Quality Leads for these areas.

Annual Compliments and Complaints Report 2022/23

The Assistant Principal for Student Experience & Wellbeing (JD) briefed the Board on the new policy which had undergone a full review to improve practice and the changes made. There is more accountability on college staff to give good customer services and timely communication in relation to low level concerns.

Annual Safeguarding Report 2022/23

The Assistant Principal for Student Experience & Wellbeing (JD) gave an overview of the report which provided data from 2022/23 interventions and noted that results were similar to 2021/22. Male referrals are increasing as barriers are being broken down with more males feeling safe to ask for support. The report also provided an update on the preventative education and ASPIRE Tutorial programme, Prevent update, progress against the AoC Mental Health and Wellbeing charter and the Single Central Register audit outcomes. Safeguarding practice is continually monitored in line with the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance via completion of the annual safeguarding audit and the organisation maintains effective safeguarding and compliance with Prevent Duty.

Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Annual Report

The Assistant Principal for Student Experience & Wellbeing (JD) presented the report and provided an update on attendance and achievement data, noting any gaps for students with EHCPs. Attendance and achievement gaps will be further reviewed

by the EDI Committee with actions agreed to address the gaps. The report also provided an update on the Gender Pay Gap where there was a reduction in the median pay gaps, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter and LGBT+ Rainbow Accreditation.

Key Performance Indicators – Performance

A full summary of in-year performance against the 23/24 Performance targets was provided within the report.

Key Risks - Performance

An overview of the performance key risks was provided within the report, including classroom-based attendance, retention and achievement, apprenticeship retention and achievement, application and offers, and Support to Improve measures within Engineering and maths and English.

Resolution: The Board **received** and **noted** the contents of the Performance Report.

6/2324

Corporate Report

The Principal/CEO (JR) presented the Corporate Report which, in addition to the key areas discussed below, included an update on the National Picture (including Government Policy & Legislation) and Strategic Relationships and Events. She provided an overview of proposals for education from the Conservatives Party, the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats and noted that the college continues to work with unions to lobby MPs for change.

The AP People and Culture (CA) provided an overview of the proposed new staff benefit 'SmartPay' which is being offered as part of the Pluxee (previously Sodexo) Employee Assistance Programme. This will provide interest free loans to help staff avoid high-interest loans or credit cards by spreading the up-front costs of technology, appliances, wellbeing and lifestyle purchases through manageable salary deductions. This scheme will support staff financially but will also support staff recruitment and retention. Approval is being sought from the Board as there would be a small risk to college should an individual leave mid-way through a repayment plan.

CH: The Board questioned how the risk would be managed and if there were costs involved in joining the scheme. The Deputy Principal (HTT) noted that the scheme will be reviewed and monitored on a regular basis and there was no cost involved for the college in signing up for the scheme.

Resolution: The Board **approved** the implementation of the 'SmartPay' staff benefit scheme.

Key Performance Indicators

The Corporate KPI outturn for 2022/23 was provided within the papers. A full update on 2023/24 will be provided to the Board at the December 2023 meeting.

Key Risks – Corporate

An overview of the key corporate risks and mitigations was provided within the report. Key risks remain as staff workload and wellbeing, recruitment and retention of staff, volatility of the apprenticeship market, inadequate levels of core funding and the bureaucracy and restrictions relating to reclassification and commercial borrowing not permitted.

Health and Safety

An update from the Health and Safety Committee was included within the report, including agreed actions, statutory audits and reports, staffing and mandatory training, with actions to mitigate risks.

Resolution: The Board **received** and **noted** the contents of the Corporate Report.

7/2324

Governance Report

The Head of Governance (JS) presented the Governance Report which, in addition to the key items highlighted below, included an update on membership, policies approved at Committee-level and ratified Committee minutes.

Governance Self-Assessment Report 2022/23 and Quality Improvement Plan 2023/24

The Governance Self-Assessment Report (GSAR) for 2022/23 and the Governance Quality Improvement Plan (GQIP) for 2023/24 had been reviewed by the Governance & Search Committee on 11/10/23 and was recommended for Board approval. The Governance and Search Committee graded itself as Good.

Resolution: The Board received and **approved** the GSAR 2022/23 and the GQIP 2023/24.

Mandatory Safeguarding and Prevent Training for Governors and Annual Requirements

Governors were reminded that if they had not been present when the Safeguarding and Prevent training was delivered and read the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 (KSCIE) that they should complete by 31st October 2023. Governors were reminded that all annual declarations need to be submitted by the end of October 2023, if not already done so.

Resolution: The Board **received** the update on completion of mandatory training and declarations to be submitted by the closing date.

Corporation Attendance

The attendance data shared with the board showed a decline in attendance on last year. Attendance has been flagged as an Area for Improvement within the GSAR 2022/23 and the Chair has raised individual concerns as part of the annual governor appraisal process. Member attendance was also reviewed by the Governance and Search Committee on 11/10/23 and has been added as an action for the GQIP in 2023/24.

External Governor Training and Development

The Board were updated on training opportunities available to governors for 2023/24. The HoG noted that the GQIP included an item relating to governor CPD and the development of a Learning and Development Policy for Governors.

New AoC Code of Good Governance

The Association of College's (AoC) Code of Good Governance (adopted by the College in June 2015) has been revised to reflect the AoC's commitment to advancing governance practices in colleges across the sector and to ensure they align seamlessly with the unique challenges and opportunities faced by Further Education institutions. For any reporting related to the previous academic year (i.e. Self-Assessment), the previous AoC Code will remain in place. To support the adoption of the new code, the AoC have created a template and will be compiling online resources, including webinars, to guide on effective engagement. The Head of Governance will lead on this and report back to the Board accordingly.

Chair's Action and Written Resolutions

The following Written Resolutions made by the Board since the previous meeting:

- Staff Pay Award (15/9/23)
- K Cashmore - Board Appointment (9/8/23)
- J Evans - Board Appointment (7/9/23)
- S Cox - Head of Governance Maternity Cover Appointment (19/9/23)

There were no Chair's Actions.

Graduation

The HoG noted that five governors had confirmed they would be attending the Graduation on 20 October 2023.

Strategic Conversations 9 November 2023/Link Governor Visits

The Chair and Principal outlined a proposal for Board participation in planning the next 5-year strategic plan. It was agreed that discussion would be launched at the next Strategic Conversations event in November. This would be followed up by Link Governor activity across the college to support governor input into the plan. LMy offered to facilitate the Strategic Conversation event and will liaise with the Principal/CEO to plan the programme.

Resolution: The Board **received** and **noted** the contents of the Governance Report.

8/2324

Statutory Reporting & Link Governor Updates

CEIAG – SMS provided a brief update on developments.

Sustainability – HTT updated Governors on the action road map. The college are looking at how the carbon footprint is measured, and once this is agreed it will allow tracking of progress. The programme for the next inset day in October was shared, the theme of which is Wellness, with activities planned around staff wellbeing. Governors are invited to attend.

Health and Safety – LN updated the board on work being undertaken ramp access to the library and asked that SMT review how this is managed during breaktimes. **Action: SMT to review management of works during break times.**

There were no updates to report for EDI, Safeguarding, or additional link governor activity.

Resolution: The Board **noted** the Statutory Reporting and Link Governor updates.

9/2324

Confidential Items

Confidential items are minuted separately under Part 2.

10/2324

Date of Next Meeting

1 December 2023

Part 1 of The meeting concluded. Staff Governors left the meeting