

Present:

Jackie Flynn (Chair)
Rebecca Parks, Group Principal
Tony Redmond
Paula Summersfield
Adam Fidler
Sam Butler
Roger Cunliffe
Sally Kells
Adrian Connell
Lucy Robinson
Kenda Ebeidin
Michael Sharples
Dr Martin Toner
Martin Townsend
Ann Gavin-Daley

In Attendance:

Karen Hollins, Chief Finance Officer
Kimberley Cash, Deputy Principal
Denise Hark, Clerk

	<p>The Chair started the meeting by thanking all governors and senior managers for their work in trying to ensure that 2022/23 was another successful year. She commented on the constructive work had taken place between the Senior Leadership Team and Governors, and recorded her appreciation for the work new governors had done to get up to speed with College business. She noted that the College had again won a number of awards, and was well placed to achieve it's recruitment targets for 2023/24. However she also cautioned that the post pandemic effects are likely to continue for at least several more years and that this was likely to impact on staff workload and on examination results. Therefore all staff were to be applauded for their efforts.</p>
22/55	<p><u>Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Natalia Dimitrova and Janet N'Dungu.</p>
22/56	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>Governors made no declarations of interest in items to be discussed at the meeting.</p>
22/57	<p><u>Corporation Membership</u></p> <p><u>Committee Membership</u></p> <p>A list of the proposed committee membership for the academic year 2023/24, as recommended by Search Committee, was provided for governors. The Chair explained the rationale and reminded governors that if at all possible all governors should be on at least two committees.</p> <p><u>Resolution 22/57a: Committee membership for the academic year 2023/24 is approved.</u></p> <p><u>Extension of Terms of Office</u></p> <p><i>(The following governors left the meeting during the discussion of the following item: MS, PS, AC, MT and SB whilst their periods of office were discussed).</i></p> <p>The Chair reported that Search Committee had made the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that MS be given a one-year extension on his term of office, following completion of his second 4-year term of office in December 2023; this is in recognition of his valuable contribution to Corporation and to allow time for the recruitment of another governor with business expertise;

- that PS be given a further 4-year term of office following completion of her first term of office in December 2023; and that she be encouraged to become a member of more committees if possible.

Resolution 22/57b: MS is given a one-year extension to his term of office from December 2023, and PS is given a second 4-year term of office from December 2023.

Consideration of Governors Probationary periods

The Chair reported that MT and AC had completed their first year as governor very satisfactorily with both having taken on the role of Committee Vice Chair during this time.

SB had also completed his first year as a full Governor; however, since he had previously been a Co-optee to the HR Committee, before becoming a full Governor, he was deemed to have completed his probation. He has also taken on the role of Chair of Audit.

The Chair reported that whilst JN wished to continue to have a role she had experienced difficulties meeting the attendance target. She had therefore indicated that she would like to move to a Co-optee role (HR Committee).

Resolution 22/57c: MT, AC and SB have successfully completed their probationary period.

Resolution 22/57d: JN to take up the role of Co-optee to the HR&OD Committee for a period of 2 years from September 2023, relinquishing her role as Independent Governor.

Confirmation of Written Resolution

Governors confirmed the written resolution to move AGD from being a Co-optee on the HR Committee to become an Independent Governor for a 2-year period of office from April 2023.

The Chair thanked all governors for undertaking work on behalf of the College, and Vice Chair commented on the support and camaraderie of the Corporation. It was considered that there was an issue in populating committees if governors did not sit on more than one committee. The Vice Chair proposed that governors wishing to progress to Corporation roles such as Chair/ Vice Chair/Committee Chair could gain useful experience and knowledge this way.

22/58

Minutes of the previous Corporation Meeting

Resolution 22/58: the minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 March 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and approved for signature by the Chair.

Matters Arising

A governor queried the statement that “agency costs are being managed but they can mask other areas such as absences”. The Chief Finance Officer reported that agency costs are being managed but they have increased due to the level of sickness absence and added that savings due to vacancies had not offset agency costs. The Group Principal noted the difficulty in obtaining agency staff and the goodwill from staff covering for colleagues. The Chair of HR&OD commented that historically agency costs had been higher but were now at a much more acceptable level.

A governor asked for an explanation about the higher attrition rate of staff. The Group Principal reported that this is higher this year but compares favourably with other Greater Manchester Colleges and the AoC average. She noted that some staff in certain areas were aged over 70. The Group Principal reported that the College is performing well with regard to staff retention.

	<p>However, it cannot compete with salaries in Sixth Form Colleges for A-Level teachers, although pay is better for other categories of staff with ESOL staff being better paid than in other colleges, where they are generally paid on a casual basis. She advised that she had recently been asked to give a presentation at the Sixth Form Colleges Association conference on how the College retains staff as well as it does. A governor commented that Covid had changed how people assess what is important to them regarding working practices. It was acknowledged that the post-Covid effect was likely to continue for a few years.</p> <p>A governor asked whether the age of teaching staff is considered when looking at succession planning. The Group Principal confirmed that this was part of general succession planning, along with other staff at risk in particular areas such as Heads of certain key departments.</p>
<p>22/59</p>	<p><u>Report from Governors' Strategy Day</u></p> <p>The Chair reported that the venue and format for the Strategy day on 17 May 2023 had worked well, and that governors and senior leaders had all expressed their enjoyment of the event.</p> <p>As a result, and following further consideration, it has been decided that with effect from the next academic year there will be two Strategy Days per year, with strategic plans being reviewed/made in the May meeting, and then progress on these being reviewed in the following October.</p> <p>The Group Principal reported that a more full discussion fo the event had taken place at the recent Strategy, Finance & Resources Committee meeting. She noted that having two external guest speakers had worked well. Having updates from the Centre Heads had also been valuable.</p> <p>A governor reported that they felt it had been a successful and enjoyable day. Another governor added that the enthusiasm of the Senior Leadership Team had been motivating.</p> <p>A governor (who had not been present at the Strategy day) queried whether the Strategy Day had led to any change in strategic direction. The Group Principal replied that three strategic proposals had been brought to governors for consideration and decisions had been made on them. This enabled the Senior Leadership Team to get a different perspective on proposed strategies, and for the direction to be amended.</p> <p>The Chair of Corporation commented that the effective engagement of all governors had assisted the revised Corporation to bond.</p> <p>Governors had discussed the Accountability Agreement at the Strategy Day and it was subsequently agreed by written resolution. The Group Principal reported that the Accountability Agreement had been signed and submitted by 31 May 2023 and it is now on the College website.</p>
<p>22/60</p>	<p><u>Chair's Report</u></p> <p>The Chair provided an oral report, from which the following was noted:</p> <p><u>College Seal</u></p> <p>The Chair reported that she had not used the seal since the last meeting of the Corporation.</p> <p><u>External Engagement</u></p> <p>The Chair reported on the recent external engagement that she had undertaken on behalf of the College. This has included continuing to convene meetings of the Greater Manchester FE Chairs' Advisory Group.</p> <p>The Chair reported that there was only one other college in Greater Manchester that was currently undergoing an external review of governance. A governor asked for an update on the external</p>

	<p>review of Governance currently ongoing. The Chair reported that following the initial meeting online the external reviewer had visited the College on 13 June 2023 to meet with the Group Principal and the Clerk, and to observe the June meeting of Quality & Standards Committee. He will return to observe the September Corporation meeting.</p> <p>The Group Principal noted that there was some concern about how subjective areas such as integrity could be assessed. The Chair of Audit confirmed that when he carries out governance reviews in other settings (as part of his employment), much of the assessment of governance is subjective.</p> <p>The Chair reported, for the benefit of new members, that Corporation had regularly undertaken reviews previously, approximately every 3 years; this included internal and external elements. However under new legislation in the Skills Bill, Corporations are required to undertake external reviews every three years, with the first one being concluded before July 2024, and the outcomes reported on College websites.</p> <p>A governor queried when the formal report would be available and was advised that this should be ready for October 2023. He indicated that he would appreciate the external reviewer presenting the report to Corporation. The Chair confirmed that this would be investigated once the timing of the final report was known.</p>
<p>22/61</p>	<p><u>Group Principal's Report</u></p> <p>The Group Principal gave a comprehensive report, from which the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The curriculum intent will be known as the College intent to save confusion amongst staff. • Strategic Development areas have included the Be Outstanding programmes for Professional Services and Academic Staff with the aim of getting staff to own their own development. • Staff survey results were positive and show improvements made from the previous year. • For the statement '<i>I understand my role and contribution I am making to the goals of the College</i>', (96.2%) of staff agreed with the statement. • The survey areas which did not score as high was '<i>opportunity to progress in the organisation</i>' and '<i>the College is committed to the Green Agenda</i>'. The Group Principal reported that much work has been carried out in the first year of the Sustainability Strategy. • The student application journey has been redesigned, with prospective students being invited into College for Masterclasses and to meet the teachers rather than attending a formal interview evening. Attendance at all open events had increased by 24%. • Applications for 2023/24 are 1200 higher than at the same point last year, however, because of the Baker Clause schools have a legal duty to get students to apply to more than one establishment. • Links have been strengthened with local primary and secondary schools. • The College has increased its external presence by working more closely with Salford City Council and the Greater Manchester Colleges Group, of which the Group Principal is now the Deputy Chair. The Group Principal also attends the Salford Secondary Heads and Principals Association meetings. <p>The following awards had been received over the year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCFE Student of the Year was won by an Apprentice in Health. • Educate North Award for Employer Engagement. • Commended in 2 AoC Beacon Awards – Support for Students and Mental Health.

- Salford Business Award won for Adult and Community programmes.

Finance

The College is currently rated as having Outstanding Financial Health and remains on track to retain this rating for the 2023/24 financial year. The Chair reported that in the past the Corporation had considered strategically 'reducing' this rating to Good if there was a serious need to invest in a particular area.

A 2.5% pay award had been paid in June 2023 and was backdated to August 2022. Feedback from staff on this had been positive.

The impact of energy costs on the budget was noted as having risen from £576k in 2020/21 to £1.5m this year, and the budget for next year has been further increased to £2.3m.

Sustainability

The following progress towards the Green Agenda were noted:

- Strategic development in Sustainability has included establishing a Green team at all sites.
- The College is Involved in numerous regional groups, supporting the advancement and commitment to the Green agenda, including the GM Mayor's taskforce and the Northern Skills Network Sustainability Group.
- Green vehicle charge points have been commissioned, to be installed over the summer break at all Colleges.
- A New Low Carbon Heating Skills Centre, with heat pumps and solar technologies, has opened at City Skills.
- The SWISH reused clothing scheme has been introduced.
- An electric car salary sacrifice scheme has been introduced.
- City Skills Big Clean up involved litter picking in the local area.
- Over 400 trees were gifted from the City of Trees partnership and planted at Eccles and Pendleton.

Welfare

- Student Safeguarding logs had increased significantly at all sites, with 3222 logs raised concerning 1250 students. It was noted that there was no additional funding to support this increase.
- 59 Mental Health First Aiders have been trained across the College sites.
- #WELLSTUDENT and #WELLSTAFF have been introduced to provide innovative mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health support for all students and staff via a comprehensive range of services and interventions.

Teaching and Learning

- There is a consistent whole College approach with the same 5 standards being used across all College sites.

- There are difficulties in recruiting students to particular areas where there are gaps in the workforce such as Teaching Assistants and Health Care due to perception of low pay and prospects once qualified.

The Deputy Group Principal then presented a report from which the following points were noted:

- Consistency is a key focus to enable all learners to have a high-quality provision.
- The College is in a strong position in meeting the local skills needs. An Industry day scheme exists for all staff to have an opportunity to go out into industry for a day. This year it took place on 7 July.
- There has been a positive 3-year trend in learner feedback. Students have said that they feel safe, are making positive progress and that they are ready for their next steps.
- Results are outstanding across a majority of courses. These are based on formal exams with no advance notice of question areas. The Deputy Principal pointed out that residual Covid implications would still be having an effect.
- Learner voice results were positive, with termly surveys being carried out to check progress over time.
- A list of the courses to be removed and those to be added, as presented to the Q&S Committee, was noted.
- The Deputy Group Principal reported on the change to Ofsted inspections. The new framework will clarify the differences between minor weaknesses in Safeguarding and ineffective Safeguarding. The new framework would be shared with governors once published.
- Ofsted will look at College data to inform their planning.

Horizon Scanning

The Group Principal reported on the government's planned removal of Vocational courses and their replacement with T Levels. It was noted that 62% of students at the College are currently studying vocational courses which presents significant concern.

Meetings have taken place with curriculum managers to look at any problems and at the expected exam results. It was reported that results are likely to be lower than last year due to some students not attending the final exams. In particular, it was reported that out of a Vocational Science cohort of 20 students with good attendance, three had not attended the exam.

The second year of the strategic plan will focus on the following principles: Refresh, Research, Innovate and Consistent.

All College sites had seen increased applications for 2023/24 with applications at Pendleton increased by 674 on the same point last year. There had been 533 students attending the new students' day which is increased by 328 compared to last year.

It is now proposed that the following areas will be looked at during the October Governors' Strategy day:

- Future Student numbers – growth and capacity.
- The Direction of HE
- Monitoring the three strategic decisions taken at the May Governors' Strategy Day.

	<p>With regard to Item 1 above the Chair reported that under a different group of leaders, circa 2013-14, student numbers had been recorded as approx 5400. However it was noted that the high number of students reported in the 2015/16 year included some part-time students who did not follow a full 540-hour programme. All students reported now are full-time. It was also noted that 16-18 partner programmes have been significantly reduced since then by choice.</p> <p>However there was a perception that the aim was still for the College to recruit over 5000 students. Governors now need to re-examine, going forward, what the optimum number of students is, and how this will be achieved. This will involve looking at the college's aims and ambitions, and will require consideration of its portfolio.</p> <p>A governor suggested that in line with trying to fill local skills needs the College should work in close partnership with the Health Service. The Group Principal confirmed that the College always tries to align with strategic partners; however this can often involve paying a fee.</p>
22/62	<p><u>Finance</u></p> <p><u>Financial Position to April 2023</u></p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer reported on the financial position as at April 2023 and the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a surplus of £1,506k excluding pension adjustment. • The cash balance was £11,879m. • All loan covenants had been met. • The quarterly loan covenant compliance certificate had been submitted to Lloyds and has been accepted. <p>The Chief Finance Officer repeated her invitation to governors to contact her through the Clerk with any queries/questions they have on the monthly accounts.</p> <p><u>2022-23 Year-end Forecast Outturn as at Quarter 3</u></p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer reported on the 2022-23 year-end forecast outturn as at Quarter 3 from which the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a surplus of £579k excluding pension adjustment showing a favourable variance of £412k. • The cash balance of £11.178m represents an increase of £2.6m due to bursaries and capital. (This is not an underlying improvement it is due to timing). • The internally calculated Financial Health rating remains Outstanding. • The loan covenant calculations indicate that there is no breach of the covenants overall, However, the position utilises the Lloyds fall-back minimum cash balance covenant. <p>The Chief Finance Officer reported on the risks to the forecast outturn as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variable income from the AEB and apprenticeships. • Agency costs have been increasing but are now tailing off towards the end of the year. • Non pay budget for energy. This has been based on the latest information from suppliers (electricity increased by 37% and gas by 10%). Invoices from suppliers have not yet been received. <p><u>Annual Treasury Management Report 2022/23</u></p>

The Annual Treasury Management Report for 2022/23, as required by the Treasury Management policy, was received and noted.

ESFA finance assessment letter and dashboards for 2021-22 finance return

The Chief Finance Officer reported that the ESFA had confirmed Outstanding financial health for the 2021/22 accounts.

HM Treasury's Managing Public Money and reclassification requirements

The Chief Finance Officer reported that financial policies and procedures are being updated to reflect the requirements of the document. The full 'Managing Public Money' document has been uploaded to the Governor Portal for information.

Draft Budget 2023-24

The Chief Finance Officer presented the draft budget for 2023-24 which had been recommended for approval by the Strategy, Finance & Resources Committee. The following points were noted:

- The financial plan shows a surplus of £370k excluding pension adjustment.
- There is a total deficit of £2,854k if the pension adjustment is included, this remains as per the 2021/22 actuarial report.
- The 2022/23 actuarial report will not be received until after year-end.
- The forecast year-end cash position shows £11.178m. This will reduce by £3m to £8.197m by July 2024 due to capital and bursaries.

Key assumptions include the following:

- The budget has been built on a baseline position and excludes one-off income/expenditure reported in 2022/23.
- Energy costs have been budget for a 50% increase for gas in October 2023 and 50% increase for gas and electricity in April 2024.
- The pay budget has been set on a post-by-post basis anticipating curriculum need.
- A pay award for 2023-24 has not been included in the budget.
- Incremental drift, circa 1%, has been included.
- The underlying contingency has reduced to £250k.

In response to a question from a governor, the Chief Finance Officer noted that the budget for a full staff headcount would lead to additional contingency funds. The budget had been based on the curriculum plan; however, this could change following recruitment.

A governor asked whether there had been any changes to the funding formula following the ONS reclassification of colleges. The Chief Finance Officer reported that colleges have received confirmation that they are allowed to retain surpluses and cash balances.

External metrics show that if the budget is achieved the ESFA financial health rating would remain as Outstanding.

Capital Budget

The capital budget is comprised of the following areas:

- An indicative Capital budget of £4.732m, of which £1.6m is funded internally.
- FE Capital Transformation Fund budget of £2.910m, which includes 40% internal funding.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An externally funded plan of £1.322m from an OfS bid and ESFA reclassification funding. • An indicative internal capital budget of £500k to be spent on Estates and IT. <p><u>Resolution 22/62a: the Budget for 2023/24 is approved.</u></p> <p><u>Partner Contract Values</u></p> <p>The Partner contract values, recommended for adoption by the Strategy, Finance & Resources Committee, have been updated following further confirmation from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. The total funding available for the Adult and Community partners is £550,512, of which £440,410 will be paid out to partners.</p> <p><u>Resolution 22/62b: the Partner Contract values are approved.</u></p> <p><u>ESFA College Financial Forecasting Return (CFFR) July 2023</u></p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer reported that the CFFR return includes the current year forecast and a 2-year financial plan, with year one being in line with the 2023/24 budget. Income and expenditure, balance sheet and cashflow also need to be submitted along with a supporting commentary. The CFFR will be signed by the Accounting Officer following approval by Corporation.</p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer noted that the CFFR would be submitted on the current budget and also noted that an updated budget would be circulated to governors in July for budget monitoring purposes.</p> <p><u>Resolution 22/62c: the ESFA College Financial Forecasting Return for July 2023 is approved.</u></p> <p>A governor asked for clarification about the Lloyds loan which was due to be refinanced by March 2026, and which will now no longer be possible following reclassification. The Chief Finance Officer confirmed that the College would need to go through a process with the DfE as colleges are no longer able to take out a commercial loan. The DfE would either require the College to pay back the loan in full or would provide a loan to the College themselves. She added that the original plan had been to have the option to pay off the loan. However, this had been before the cost-of-living crisis affecting the budget. It was noted that the Lloyds loan would become a short-term loan in 2024/25. The Chief Finance Officer reported that she had started discussions with Barclays in order to avoid a potential breach of covenant if the Lloyds loan is paid off.</p>
<p>22/63</p>	<p><u>Review of Financial Regulations</u></p> <p>The Financial Regulations had been recommended for approval by the Strategy, Finance & Resources Committee.</p> <p><u>Resolution 22/63 the Financial Regulations are approved for 2023/24</u></p>
<p>22/64</p>	<p><u>Approval of Finance related policies</u></p> <p><u>Resolution 22/64: The following policies recommended for approval by the Strategy, Finance & Resources Committee and the Audit Committee are approved:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expenses Policy • Treasury Management Policy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuition Fees Policy • Sub-Contracting Policy • Supply Chain Fees & Charges Policy • Anti-bribery Policy • Fraud & Irregularity Policy • Risk Management Policy. 				
22/65	<p><u>Risk Register</u></p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer gave a report on the high-level risk register which included areas which had been rated as a 6 or higher, and also areas which had previously rated as a 6 but where the risk has now reduced. The two new areas listed had previously been included within other risks.</p> <p>It was noted that the full risk register is available on the Governor Portal.</p>				
22/66	<p><u>Corporate Business Update</u></p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer reported on the financial impact felt, following the introduction of the new role of Head of Corporate Business in June 2022, during the current financial year. The impact showed a net contribution to the revenue budget of £244k and £330k to the capital budget to be spent this year, with a further £70k from grants to be spent in the following year.</p> <p>A governor asked why the amount received for the bootcamps had been lower than forecast. The Group Principal explained that the College had only been able to invoice for £57k as the rules have subsequently changed. Colleges are now only able to claim the funding once the learner has got a job as a result of the bootcamp rather than just getting an interview.</p> <p>It was reported that the key part of the role for next year is to increase income and bids; £245k has been budgeted for this with the target for the Head of Corporate Business's target being £315k. The Group Principal reported that the Head of Corporate Business would continue to work on external presence around subcontracting which is a benefit to students as well as being a financial benefit. He is currently working with the Apprenticeship team to assist in Project £5m by using his strategic relationships. The Group Principal reported that the role would become broader and would include research and development work to support income generation.</p> <p>A governor asked what the previous target for hiring out sports facilities had been. It was confirmed that prior to MC starting in role this had only been £80k with this target having not previously been achieved.</p> <p>A governor asked who is responsible for setting the objectives for the Head of Corporate Business. The Group Principal replied that he reports to the Chief Finance Officer and his objectives are jointly set by herself and the Chief Finance Officer. She added that the objectives also include softer targets such as relationship building.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that the income generated by the post is invested in the College to support the College's aims, and it helps to underwrite the main mission of the College.</p>				
22/67	<p><u>Governance</u></p> <p><u>Committee Minutes</u></p> <p><u>Resolution 22/67a: the minutes of the following Committee meetings were received and approved for signature as a correct record:</u></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Audit Committee</td> <td style="width: 50%;">15 May 2023</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Human Resources &OD Committee</td> <td>9 May 2023</td> </tr> </table>	Audit Committee	15 May 2023	Human Resources &OD Committee	9 May 2023
Audit Committee	15 May 2023				
Human Resources &OD Committee	9 May 2023				

Search Committee	6 June 2023
Quality & Standards Committee	13 June 2023
Strategy, Finance & Resources Committee	20 June 2023

The following points from Committee minutes were noted, with Committee Chairs taking questions:

Audit Committee

The Chair of Corporation asked for some further details of the discussion of audit report on attendance. A governor reported that it had been the Internal Auditor who had brought the report to the committee. He added that the Committee had been reassured with the findings of the Internal Auditors and what the College was doing to improve attendance. The Chief Finance Officer noted that an Internal Audit had been undertaken on the Student Journey with the main finding coming out of this being attendance which is regularly discussed at the Quality & Standards Committee meeting. It is the role of the Audit Committee to check whether the actions have been completed to provide assurance.

A governor questioned the risk reported on overriding internal controls. The Chief Finance Officer reported that this was part of a standard list for all external audits in Further Education and would be one of the areas that the auditors would check.

A governor asked whether a decision had been taken on whether to carry out a Mock Funding Audit. The Chief Finance Officer reported that the Audit Committee had not been required to make a decision as this had been included in the plan. She added that historically the Internal Auditors carry out a Mock Funding Audit every year as it is useful and is relied on by the External Auditors.

HR&OD Committee

A governor questioned the rationale behind the reduction in working hours for Professional Services staff from 37 to 36 hours per week. The Chief Finance Officer reported that this was a positive staff change to improve morale. This would also have the effect of improving the hourly rate. A governor asked whether there had been any reaction from teaching staff. The Chair of HR&OD reported that feedback during the Link Governor visits indicated that teachers are pleased with their terms and conditions. The Chief Finance Officer reported that this change to working hours brings the College in line with the staff terms and conditions for staff working at Salford City Council.

Search Committee

The Chair reported that the committee had recommended extending periods of office, completion of governors' probationary periods, and committee membership for the next academic year.

The Committee had reviewed the Scheme of Delegation and had agreed that there should be further responsibilities delegated where appropriate, and also that the language of the SoD and format should be modernised.

The Committee had also recommended that there should be two Link Governor visits per year.

The fact that there were a significant number of new governors who were not familiar with current practices, was noted by the committee, which had agreed that some guidance notes might be in order. Therefore following the meeting the Chair had prepared the first two sets of guidance notes to inform governors of the Corporation's current conventions around attendance at meetings (see item below).

Quality & Standards

The Chair reported that the Committee had noted significant levels of poor literacy and the Co-optee to the Committee, who is a local Head Teacher, had confirmed that this issue was also being experienced in the local schools.

The Committee had discussed the proposed changes to vocational courses following the Skills Reform.

Other areas discussed included student recruitment and the Strategic Continuous Curriculum Cycle.

The Committee had also discussed the #WELLSTUDENT campaign and had noted the impressive list of what is on offer for students. The Chair reported that the Committee had been pleased to note that the combined Student Council had been able to meet this year.

A governor asked whether the Committee had followed up on the Student Journey as reported by the Audit Committee. It was confirmed that student data, including attendance data, was a standing item on the Q&S Committee's agenda. The Deputy Group Principal reported that the SLT were aware of the attendance issue before the Internal Audit report had been completed and this had been discussed at a Quality & Standards Committee meeting, prior to the Internal Audit being carried out.

Strategy, Finance & Resources Committee

The Chair reported that the Committee had given consideration as to what future student numbers should be. It is intended that there will be strategic consideration of this matter at the Strategy Day in October 2023.

Corporation Guidance notes

Following discussion at Search Committee on observer status at committee meetings, and attendance at committee meetings, Guidance notes had been prepared by the Chair of Corporation and these were presented to Corporation for approval which was given. The Clerk agreed to arrange for them to be uploaded to the Governor Portal.

In terms of the issue of attendance, the Chair reported that Corporation had reaffirmed that, post pandemic, attendance at all meetings in person is required as was previously the case. However, it was recognised that there might need to be some exceptions to this rule.

A governor noted that the Audit Committee had been permitted to meet online in 2022/23 and queried whether it would be able to continue meeting online. The Chair confirmed that the Audit Committee issue had been discussed in the wider context by the Search Committee, and that the Chair of Audit and the Chief Finance Officer had been requested to submit a paper to that committee stating the current position and, if desired putting forward a case about why it should continue online. This report will be discussed at the first meeting of the Governance & Search Committee in the Autumn term 2023. In the meanwhile the Audit Committee will be able to hold their first meeting in the Autumn Term online whilst awaiting a decision.

A governor commented that there should be some flexibility as it might be beneficial for some ad hoc meetings to be held online. It was agreed that hybrid meetings had not been successful and improved video conferencing resources would need to be sourced if hybrid meetings are to be organised.

	<p>The Chair of Audit made the point that he did not believe that there had been evidence of any risk occurring by meeting virtually.</p> <p>It was noted that the Guidance Paper might need to be amended if the Audit Committee is permitted to continue meeting online, although the Chair pointed out that the Guidance Notes did allude to the potential for exceptions to be made.</p> <p><u>Scheme of Delegation</u></p> <p>The draft Scheme of Delegation had been approved at the previous Corporation meeting and it had been requested that the document be reviewed by Search Committee to consider further areas for delegation. A paper had been presented at Search Committee to consider what policies could be approved, either in full by a particular committee, or whether a committee should be allowed to approve minor amendments to a particular policy.</p> <p>A list of those policies which it is proposed should be delegated to committees for approval was presented to Corporation, and will be appended to the committee terms of reference.</p> <p><u>Resolution 22/67b: that the delegation of policy approval to committees, as recommended by Search Committee, should be approved.</u></p> <p><u>Code of Conduct 2023/24</u></p> <p>The Clerk reported that there had not been any changes to the Code of Conduct since it was last approved by Corporation, but confirmed that it was usual practice to approve the Code of Conduct annually to reaffirm its values.</p> <p><u>Resolution 22/67c: the Code of Conduct for Governors for 2023/24 is approved.</u></p> <p><u>Progress Report on the External Review of Governance</u></p> <p>This item had been covered under a previous item.</p> <p><u>Annual Meeting Schedule</u></p> <p>A draft Annual Meeting Schedule for 2023/24 was presented for discussion and agreement. The document includes link visits and governor workshops. It was agreed that the times for the governor development sessions be moved to 3.30- 5.30pm, to assist working governors, rather than 2pm. An additional Link Governor day would be included to take place during week commencing 6 November 2023. The date for the proposed Strategy Day in October will need to be rescheduled to an alternative week.</p> <p>The Clerk was asked to circulate the final document when the changes have been amended.</p>
<p>22/68</p>	<p><u>Meeting Evaluation Form</u></p> <p>The Chair requested that governors complete the Meeting Evaluation form and return it to the Clerk at the end of the meeting. The Chair reported that the Search Committee reviews responses, and that they were considering whether the form could be usefully amended to enable more open ended responses.</p>
<p>22/69</p>	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>A governor asked whether replies to any questions of wider interest raised by a governor with the Group Principal could be sent to all governors to keep them informed. The Group Principal agreed that this would be done where appropriate.</p>

	<p>A governor suggested that a report referencing the development of student numbers over the years should be prepared to inform the discussion at the Strategy day in October 2023, and to be kept on file.</p>
22/70	<p><u>Date of Next meeting</u></p> <p>The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 19 September at 2pm. The Chair reported that the External Reviewer intended to be in attendance at this meeting.</p> <p><i>(All staff left the meeting at this point - 7pm)</i></p> <p><i>Adrian Connell left the meeting at this point.</i></p>