

Present:

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

In Attendance:

Karen Hollins, Chief Finance Officer
Kimberley Cash, Deputy Principal
Ashley Newell, Interim Clerk

	<p>The Chair started the meeting by welcoming all the governors and senior managers to the first Corporation meeting of the academic year and highlighted it would be another challenging year.</p> <p>The Chair reported that Denise Hark, the Clerk, had left the College over the Summer, and thanked Ashley Newell for standing in as an interim clerk until an appointment is made.</p> <p>She advised that the External Review of Governance being carried out by Martin McNeill had had to be postponed, and would re-commence after October half term 2023. Further details are to follow.</p>
23/01	<p><u>Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Paula Summersfield and Michael Sharples.</p> <p>It was reported that the second Student Governor is in the process of being appointed.</p>
23/02	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>Governors made no declarations of interest in items to be discussed at the meeting.</p>
23/03	<p><u>Minutes of the previous Corporation Meeting</u></p> <p><u>Resolution 22/58: the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 July 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and approved for signature by the Chair.</u></p> <p><u>Matters Arising</u></p> <p>The Chair clarified (top of page 4) that the External Reviewer, Martin McNeill, who had started the review in the summer term, would be visiting the College after October half-term to resume this work. The Chair drew members' attention to the Annual Meeting Schedule/Calendar, and reminded them of the forthcoming Governor Development workshop at 4.00-6.00pm (previously noted as 3.30-5.30 pm) Tuesday 10 October in the Silent Study Hall.</p> <p>A governor asked about Horizon Scanning, and it was agreed that a Horizon Scanning update would be provided at the next Quality & Standards meeting. The Group Principal also highlighted that she would make reference to it in her presentation.</p>

	<p>A governor requested that minutes of meetings should be circulated prior to their confirmation, whilst they were still in draft form, because of the long gap between meetings.</p> <p>The matter was discussed, including the pro and cons of this amended arrangement. The Chair reminded members that minutes were available on the portal. It was decided that the current arrangements should be reviewed, and that it should be possible for draft minutes (once Chair approved) to be able to be circulated to members, as long as they were clearly marked 'DRAFT' to save any confusion.</p>
<p>23/04</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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The Chair reported that Bury College now has a new Chair. ii) She is currently in the process of convening the first meeting of the academic year for the Greater Manchester GFE Chairs' Advisory Group.
<p>23/05</p>	<p><u>Strategy - 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 Group Principal reminded the meeting of the College's vision, share purpose, values and curriculum intent. • Overall, the Group Principal was pleased with results compared to the last real set of results in 2018-2019. • Whilst there had been a slight decline in A level results, the Group Principal highlighted the need to make comparison with the last set of real results in 2018-2019 (exam results) and how the national picture had shown significant decline in grades following TAGs. • The Group Principal explained how the latest benchmarks are yet to be published and they would show the results in a more favourable light. • Vocational Pass rates for Level 3 remained strong with a 2% decline compared to last year and high grades remained the same at 68%. • There were slight improvements in GCSE Maths and English grades 9-4 compared to our 2018-2019 outcomes. • The 19+ achievement rate was +5% compared to 2018-2019 which involved 5,559 qualifications compared to 1,645 qualifications in 2018-2019 • The apprenticeship overall rate was very good, currently 60%, which is 6.6% above the current National Average. • The decline in overall achievement rates were essentially due to the impact of L1 Maths and English Functional Skills, with over 509 16–18-year-olds taking M&E due to the low 54% +G4 pass rate in high schools and the 79% retention rate for A level. • The Group Principal highlighted the Next Steps included the removal of Functional Skills and stated current A level students were better prepared with advice and guidance. • The high-level College SAR would outline in further detail the results with a detailed action plan to address the areas of improvement. • The Deputy Principal outlined the external presence of the college, including a successful results day, press release, building community confidence and relationships with our key stakeholders. • The Deputy Principal highlighted the key awards won by the college and the key estates work being undertaken across the colleges.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation for 2023-2024 was outlined with marketing, digital and radio campaigns to keep students and stakeholders engaged and consolidate relationships. • Our 16-18 enrolment target had been exceeded by approx. 350+ learners. • Adult and HE enrolment was slightly down compared to target whilst applications from Apprentices had exceeded its target. • The Corporation’s Strategic Away day on 1 November 2023 is an opportunity to review progress on the 3 strategic decisions, the curriculum offer and quality. • The Group Principal highlighted how far we had come with our Strategic Plan and explained the key internal and external challenges facing the college. <p>Governors discussed a number of issues after the presentation, including M&E achievement rates in local schools and their impact on the College; timetables and staffing; high levels of local deprivation; and the significance of low school attendance rates.</p> <p>The Group Principal explained how the Summer 2023 results would be contextualised both in the College SAR, and relevant position papers for Ofsted.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Group Principal and Deputy Principal for their presentation.</p>
<p>23/06</p>	<p><u>Finance</u></p> <p><u>Financial Position to July 2023</u></p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer reported on the draft Year-end financial position as at July 2023 and the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Statement have been drafted and ready for external audit. • Figures presented are in line with management accounts (£20k increase in non-pay) • Annual report and accounts will be presented to Audit Committee and SF&R in November, then recommended to Corporation for approval. <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"> • Financial position – surplus of £1,049k excluding pension adjustment and a favourable variance to forecast of £470k. • Cash balance of £12.658 m with a £1.480 improvement forecast driven by improvement in financial position, lower than planned capital and bursary expenditure and partner and other trade creditors. • Internally calculated Financial Health score of Outstanding. • All FE Commissioner benchmarks met. • Provisional loan covenant calculations based on draft financial statements indicate not in breach. • Performance against Forecast -There is a surplus of £579k excluding pension adjustment showing a favourable variance of £470k. • Pension adjustment can result in accounts reporting a deficit but does not actually affect our financial performance. • Pension impact – all outstanding financial health, meet all FEC benchmarks do not breach covenants. • FE Funding update – • ESFA July 2023 funding announcement not usual practice but funding to address “the recruitment and retention of staff”. Delivered through core 16-19 funding with confirmation due in Sept and payment in October.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money for pay award 6.5%. • It was noted that the Group Principal and Chief Executive's expenses for 2022-23 were seen and noted. • Risk Management High risks • The Chief Finance Officer reported highlighted the 6 key risks including cyber security breach, failure to comply with safeguarding, inability to refinance the Lloyds loan in March 2026, data protection breach and Health and Safety incident which leads to intervention by the Health and Safety Executive. • Each risk has an owner identified with a committee to report to and monitor residual risk score. <p>One governor proposed a re-wording of risk and of what was reportable. The Corporation agreed that there should be a re-wording of risk to provide greater clarity.</p> <p><u>Pay Award 2023/24</u></p> <p>The Chair initiated a discussion about the level of the 2023/24 pay award in the light of additional funding provided by the ESFA/DfE for this year. The additional money has been paid through student numbers, but is only really targeted at staff who teach 16–18-year-olds. This had then led to the AoC alluding to a 6.5% pay award, without any qualification about monies not being given in respect of all staff. This causes confusion amongst staff and raises expectations, which may not be able to be fulfilled.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that Corporation will need to consider what is affordable, and sustainable, and most importantly whether the amount agreed should be offered to all teaching staff and professional services staff. She advised that she will endeavour to find out what other GM Colleges intend to do. Ove the past few years the College has been taking steps to value more the professional services staff, and to not give them the pay award would seem to be a retrograde step. Governors were keen to offer teaching and support staff the same pay award due to the impact of the cost-of-living crisis upon all College staff, and their belief that all staff played an equal part in the success of the College. It was agreed that this matter needed further investigation, and a pay model needs to be produced which fits with the agreed direction of travel. The Chair thanked governors for giving the Chief Finance Officer a clear steer on their views about this matter.</p> <p>A governor queried the impact of an adverse Ofsted inspection, and it was noted that this would be significant, but have a limited impact compared to a Grade 4 inspection, as a result of a safeguarding incident.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Chief Financial Officer for her presentation.</p>
<p>23/07</p>	<p><u>Governance</u></p> <p><u>Governors Skills Audit.</u></p> <p>The Chair reminded governors to complete and return their governor Skills Audit forms to Lindsey Hardman in the post. Equally governors could scan and email copies if this was more convenient. It was agreed that LH would re-circulate Governor Skills Audit forms to governors, and noted that electronic copies are available on the portal.</p> <p><u>Annual Schedule of Business</u></p>

	<p>The Chair reminded governors that the Annual Schedule of Business details the annual schedule of work for each committee. This has been produced at the request of the internal auditors.</p> <p><u>Chair’s Evaluation Process 2022/2023.</u></p> <p><i>(The Chair left the room during the reporting of this item.)</i></p> <p>The Vice Chair briefed members on the Chair’s Evaluation Process which culminates in the production of a report from an external examiner, based on governors’ feedback in a formal questionnaire. The report for 2022/23 had been prepared by David Linnell OBE (a retired Group Principal and Education Consultant). The Vice Chair confirmed that it was a very positive report.</p> <p>The Group Principal agreed, and praised its findings. She agreed with the comments on the Chair’s experience, commitment and workload. The Vice Chair stated it was a very complimentary report, and agreed with the observations and remarks regarding hard work and dedication of the Chair.</p> <p><i>(The Chair rejoined the meeting.)</i></p> <p>The Chair returned to the meeting, and confirmed that she would continue with the Annual Governor Development interviews and Chair Evaluation as long as Corporation felt that these were valuable exercises.</p>
<p>23/08</p>	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>A governor reported that he felt that reducing the number of SLT members attending Corporation meetings was sensible, and the Group Principal advised that the intention is that SLT attendance should be based on need only e.g. to present reports and presentations. The Chair agreed that it was a case of achieving the right balance.</p> <p>The Vice Chair asked if members could be sent copies of the Group Principal’s PPT, and it was agreed that the Governance Assistant would circulate these.</p>
<p>23/09</p>	<p><u>Date of Next meeting</u></p> <p>It was reported that the next meeting will be held on Tuesday 12 December at 2.00pm at Worsley College.</p> <p><i>(Staff Governors, Student Governors, and SLT members then left the meeting - 4.45pm)</i></p>