

WQE & Regent College Group

Corporation Meeting 14 December 2022, 17:00, Room G01,
University Road Campus

Members of the Corporation in attendance:

Philip Parkinson (Chair), Orhan Ahmed, Wayne Allsopp, Joyce Black, Jo Cooke, Sofie Dadge, Shamir Ghumra, Shelley Harvey, Upneet Kang, Neil McGhee, Ing'utu Palmer, Jim Phillips, Amrik Singh, Paul Wilson, Aaron Winterton & Jimmy Zachariah

Other attendees:

Carolyn Davies, Andrew Jackson, Rachel Middleton, Sarah Oldfield, Gareth Jones (external auditor)

Apologies:

Stuart Dawkins, Bernadette Green, Anas Mohamed, Tim Rogers

MINUTES - (Part 1 Meeting)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting. Orhan Ahmed and Amrik Singh joined the meeting via Teams. Apologies were received from Stuart Dawkins, Bernadette Green, Anas Mohamed and Tim Rogers.

The Chair confirmed that long serving External Governor, Jo Cooke, is moving out of the area and is therefore stepping down as a Governor following the January 2023 Corporation meeting. Thanks were expressed to Jo for her commitment and service to the College and its students over a significant period.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in agenda items.

3. Minutes and matters arising– Paper 001

The minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 16 November 2022 were approved as a correct record.

The action list was reviewed. The following actions were completed during the intervening period between meetings and subsequently removed from the action list:

- Circulate definitions of gender and preferred pronouns to Governors by email
- Clerk to send revised Governor Insights protocol and feedback pro formas to all Governors

OVERSIGHT OF FINANCE, RESOURCES & ASSETS

4. 2020-2021 End of Year financial matters

Gareth Jones, RSM

Emerging Issues Report from Auditors – Paper 002

Gareth outlined the highlights from the Emerging Issues Report.

Governors affirmed they were aware of the requirement for an external review of governance and are making preparations to pursue this in Spring 2024.

Gareth briefed the Corporation on the Office for National Statistics' reclassification of Colleges back into the public sector, highlighting some of the short-term impacts.

He confirmed that there will be a new Colleges Handbook which outlines the changes.

Governors noted the changes and prospective delays around seeking consents from Government. Further clarity around whether the ESFA will assume additional duties in light of the changes is expected.

Further discussion on the topic of reclassification will be tabled at the Governor Conference on 8 March 2023.

Papers recommended to the Corporation from the 30 November Audit & Risk Committee

Joyce Black

- i. WQE statutory accounts – Paper 003
- ii. Audit Findings Report – Paper 004
- iii. Internal Controls Annual Report - Paper 005
- iv. Health & Safety Annual Report for 2021/22– Paper 006
- v. Headline Risk Register and Plan – Paper 007
- vi. Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report – Paper 008
- vii. QED (Leicester) Ltd annual accounts for year ended 31 July 2022 – Paper 009

Based on the recommendation of the Audit & Risk Committee, the Corporation approved Papers 003 – Paper 009.

The revisions to the Headline Risk Register and Plan (Paper 007) which the Principal had worked on in the intervening period between the Committee and Corporation meeting were noted and thanks were expressed to the Principal for the update. Thanks were expressed to Sofie Dadge and Neil McGhee in particular for their support of the Committee, by committing to attend the November meeting as voting members.

5. Letters of representation from Auditors

Carolyn Davies

- i. WQE Audit Letter of representation (financial statements) – Paper 010
- ii. WQE Audit Regulatory Assurance Letter – Paper 011

Both letters of representation were approved by the Corporation.

6. Revised budget Commentary Paper 012 – *For approval*

Carolyn Davies

Carolyn highlighted the three areas where there was some uncertainty relating to the budget: cost of living pay rise, student enrolment figures and costs for Phase 2A estates works, planned for summer 2023.

Governors asked questions about the College's financial health grading, any prospective impact on the student experience based on the revised budget, costs/opportunities and threats relating to the use of agency staff.

Governors requested an update on the costs associated with the use of agency staff for the January Corporation meeting, to enable them to have a holistic understanding of the impact across the College. **Action CD**

The Corporation approved the revised budget.

7. Monthly management accounts (October) - Paper 013 - *To note*

Carolyn Davies

Carolyn confirmed that the cashflow had not been reprofiled in the October management accounts following the ONS notification about the reclassification of Colleges, but will be reprofiled in the subsequent set of management accounts tabled for the January 2023 Corporation meeting.

8. Phase 2A Procurement route Report - Paper 014 – *For approval*

Carolyn Davies

Governors considered the advantages and disadvantages of using a tendering or purchasing framework in terms of securing value for money and the deliverability of the estates project within available timelines and supply chains.

After extensive discussion, Governors approved adoption of a payment framework approach, in keeping with prior decisions relating to the Estates Master Plan.

OVERSIGHT OF STRATEGIC DIRECTION

9. Principal's Update – (Presentation to follow) – *For information and questions*

Paul Wilson

The Principal's update focused on the following:

- Reclassification of Colleges into the Public Account
- Capital allocation

- Successful grant bid to enhance media and creative arts facilities
- University Road campus right of way issue
- Annual Strategic Conversation with the ESFA
- Withdrawal of the Skills Bill, meaning withdrawal of the legislative tools planned to deliver full academisation in the school system by 2030
- Student support activity

Governors raised questions about secure spaces for students on campus, recognising this as an important priority into the future and considered control, safeguarding and safety issues.

The Corporation agreed to commit to legal fees for the College to challenge the Council's decision to prepare a modification order to enforce a pedestrian route through the University Road campus.

10. Strategic Context update (2)– *For information and questions*

Paul Wilson

The Principal delivered the second in the series of strategic context updates. The focus of this update was on FE curriculum reform and related post-Ofsted priorities. This led to further discussion about how national policy direction for curriculum might align with our own post-Ofsted quality improvement priorities and the need to consider these aspects together, especially in light of previously discussed pressures on capacity.

11. Executive summary of SAR and QIP - Paper 015 – *For information and questions*

Tim Rogers

PW presented the paper in TR's absence and the Corporation noted the contents. The revised Executive Summary format was noted as helpful in highlighting the key areas clearly and concisely. Governors noted that the paper showed a clear alignment between the outcomes of the Spring Inspection and Summer outcomes with the Self-Assessment judgements and proposed areas for improvement in 2022/23. The full SAR will be issued to Governors in the new year ahead of the end of January submission deadline, in order to make any observations or raise queries. **Action RM** to facilitate.

12. Quality Improvement Statement 2022-23- Paper 016

– For information and questions

Tim Rogers

PW presented the paper in TR's absence and the Corporation noted the contents. Governors were encouraged to submit any subsequent questions via email directly to TR.

OVERSIGHT OF STUDENT OUTCOMES & EXPERIENCES

13. Two-year Course Retention Monitoring Report - Paper 017 – *For information and questions*

Tim Rogers

PW presented the paper in TR's absence, highlighting the positive position in all areas except Level 3 vocational provision where achievement rates in 2023 are already impacted. At this stage the College was focused on maximising pass rates for the completing cohort to limit further impacts on achievement rate in this area. Improving year 1 retention for the new cohort will enable improved achievement rates by Summer 2024. The Corporation noted the paper.

14. Student Voice: Early Weeks Questionnaire - Paper 018 – *For information and questions*

Sarah Oldfield

One third of all new students responded to the questionnaire (558 respondents). Sarah reported that 97% of students would recommend the College to others.

The Corporation noted the action points.

EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT GOVERNANCE

15. Annual self-review of governance 2021-2022: findings

– Paper 019 - *For information and questions*

Rachel Middleton

The Corporation noted the findings. The Clerk highlighted the strength of the feedback on page 23 where Governors had reflected on the areas in which governance decisions had impacted positively on the student experience. The Corporation formally approved a grading of Good for its governance arrangements.

The Chair of the Governance & Search Committee and the Clerk to Corporation will meet in January 2023 to consider and propose actions based on the review, with a view to preparing the Corporation for external review of governance in Spring 2024.

Action JB and RM

ROUND-UP

16. Any Other Business

The Chair thanked Governors and staff for their ongoing commitment to Governor inductions which had taken place in the intervening period between meetings or were scheduled for January and February 2023.

Governors were reminded of the opportunity to access a recorded webinar from the SFCA focusing on audit for 2023.

17. Confidentiality

The following papers remain confidential and will not be publicly accessible.

- Principal's Update

- Strategic Context briefing
- Phase 2A Procurement Route Report

18. Next Meeting – 14.12.22

Student Governors, Staff Governors and members of staff, with the exception of the Clerk were asked to leave the meeting at this point. A confidential agenda item relating to the recommendations of the Remuneration Committee followed for External and Parent Governors only.

Next Corporation meeting

5.00pm, Wednesday 25 January 2023, Room G01, University Road campus

Action List

| Actions arising from 14 December 2022 Corporation meeting | Who is responsible? | Date for completion |
|--|----------------------------|---|
| Provide an update on the costs associated with the use of agency staff for the next Corporation meeting, to enable Governors to have a holistic understanding of the impact across the College | CD | January Corporation meeting |
| Issue full SAR to Governors for feedback direct to Tim Rogers | RM | Circulate in early Jan, with mid-Jan deadline for comment |
| Meet to identify action points based on results of self-review of governance | JB and RM | January 2023 |
| Actions arising from 16 November 2022 Corporation meeting | Who is responsible? | Date for completion |
| Present data on the destinations of students who have left Level 3 vocational courses due to not passing the exam element of the course | TR | Next Student Outcomes Task & Finish Group meeting |
| Clerk to send revised Governor Insights protocol and feedback pro formas to all Governors | RM | |
| Standing item | Who is responsible? | Date for completion |
| To refer any matter which could be externally assured to the Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee | All Governors | |

Signature:

Chair of the Corporation

Date: