

WQE & Regent College Group

Corporation Meeting 05 October 2022, 17:00, Room G01,
University Road campus

Members of the Corporation in attendance:

Philip Parkinson (Chair), Joyce Black, Jo Cooke, Sofie Dadge, Stuart Dawkins, Bernadette Green, Shelley Harvey, Neil McGhee, Jash Maadhavji, Nisar Navsariwala, Ing'utu Palmer, Jim Phillips, Amrik Singh, Paul Wilson, Aaron Winterton & Jimmy Zachariah

Other attendees:

Carolyn Davies, Andrew Jackson, Tim Rogers, Donna Trusler, Rachel Middleton

Apologies:

Wayne Allsopp, Anas Mohamed, Sarah Oldfield

AGENDA

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed attendees to the first Corporation meeting of the academic year and to my his first as Chair.

Apologies were received and accepted from Wayne Allsopp and Sarah Oldfield.

The Chair confirmed this to be the last meeting for Nisar Navsariwala, who concludes his tenure as Parent Governor on 31st October. Thanks were expressed for Nisar's commitment and time given to the role.

The Chair confirmed this to be the last meeting for Jash who has served for two academic years as Student Governor. A certificate of appreciation will be mailed to Jash to thank him for his service.

2. Declarations of Interest

None relating to matters tabled.

Stuart Dawkins declared a new interest based on a recently appointed governance role at a local university.

3. Minutes and matters arising – Paper 001

To approve the minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 29 June 2022 as a correct record. To review the matters arising captured in the action list.

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

The action list was discussed. The following matters were completed during the intervening period between Corporation meetings and subsequently removed from the action list:

- Reporting and monitoring through the Student Outcomes task and finish group on the tracking of students who were formerly in receipt of Pupil

Premium funding and Free School Meals – tabled for the 11th October 2022 Student Outcomes meeting

- Build into the Business Plan the opportunity for the Principal to provide a staffing projection at the same time in the business cycle for 2022-23 outlining the age profile of staff and the impact on the College of the numbers nearing retirement – confirmed for June 2023 Corporation meeting

GOVERNOR BRIEFING AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

4. Safeguarding and PREVENT (Presentation)

Donna Trusler

Governors received a briefing on Safeguarding and PREVENT. Governors will receive instructions on how to access and complete follow-up training online.

Donna outlined a number of new initiatives including the regional PREVENT Lead

focusing on risks relating to hate crimes, PIN briefings received directly from the police and the 6-month long Operation Encompass trial focusing on domestic abuse as well as other safety matters. Donna highlighted the Violence Reduction Network and the fact that students will become violence reduction mentors. Donna reported that she was involved with meeting faith leaders in light of the recent unrest in Leicester city.

The College's Safeguarding Assistant has been triaging safeguarding reports as they come into the inbox.

Donna confirmed that there is a known peak in student safeguarding reports in the month of January. Staff know to expect and plan for this again in 2023. Frequent referrals for support relate to mental health and family-related issues.

In 2020/21 there were more females than males reporting they had mental health issues, whereas in 2021/22 more males were reporting. National research suggest 1 in 6 young people are struggling with their mental health. Governors asked whether the Corporation needed to invest further support into resources to support students.

5. Safeguarding young people – annual refresh of policy & procedure – Paper 002

Donna Trusler

The policy has been updated to fully reflect the changes to the 2022 iteration of Keeping Children Safe in Education. The policy was approved by the Corporation.

Governors asked how long students who have left the College continue to be offered support through the Student Assistance Programme.

Donna confirmed this was offered for 6 months following students' departure and after this point former students are still signposted to other relevant services.

The College's Link Safeguarding Governor confirmed she was content with the safeguarding support being offered in College and affirmed that this had been positively endorsed by Ofsted.

6. PREVENT Risk Register - Paper 003

Donna Trusler

Governors considered and noted the recently updated PREVENT Risk Register.

7. Update on Prevention of Sexual Abuse Action Plan – Paper 004

Donna Trusler

Governors received and noted the update via circulation of the paper.

OVERSIGHT OF STRATEGIC DIRECTION

8. Principal's Update - Presentation

Paul Wilson

The Principal's Update covered the following matters:

- 2022/23 student enrolment data
- Student attendance rate – 92.4%
- An overview of student punctuality across curriculum areas
- An overview of CPD and training activity, including a focus on SEND and Education and Health Care Plans, as well as a planned collaborative CPD event in Spring 2023 with five other Sixth Form Colleges
- An overview of staff recruitment, examining student support and teaching recruitment numbers
- Recent tensions within the City of Leicester and the resilience and calmness of College students in response. Advice provided to students on the dangers and impact of misinformation via social media
- An overview of the way in which examinations will be conducted for the 2023 season
- Key events and celebrations for the College

The Principal confirmed the College was exploring the possibility of opening as a warm space during the winter, for our students and families, as well as potentially for members of the wider community as a response to rising energy prices within their own homes.

OVERSIGHT OF STUDENT OUTCOMES & EXPERIENCES

9. Student Outcomes headlines

Tim Rogers – Presentation

The presentation focused on:

- Whole college retention, pass and achievement rates for students leaving at the end of 2021/22
- This included a breakdown of performance via levels (entry, 1,2,3) and type of qualification (vocational, A-level, GCSE)
- As part of the analysis, data was presented which showed performance via gender and ethnicity
- Value added data is less reliable for this cohort due to the use of historic databases which have not taken into account the impact of TAG and CAG GCSE's in 2020 and 2021
- Based on the analysis of 2021/22 results, key sub-groups had been identified for more focused work in 2022/23
- Whole college success stories:
 - Retention rates have significantly improved over the last few years which has impacted positively on overall achievement rates
 - A level achievement rates have significantly improved compared to pre-pandemic performance (2018/2019)
 - Strong levels of higher education progression
 - Focused support for students with protected characteristics and specific needs is having a positive impact on outcomes
 - GCSE Maths and English results continue to be significantly above the national averages for similar post-16 providers
- Areas for Development –
 - There are still performance gaps that need to be closed. There are gaps between the pass rates of male and female students as well as varying performance outcomes between different ethnic groups.
 - Not all of the sub-groups that were part of the Task and Finish Group focus showed improvements in outcomes.
 - Performance on vocational provision is not as strong as that of academic provision. This was highlighted in the Ofsted inspection in March 2022.
 - The college will ensure there are ambitious and realistic targets in place for 2022/23

All Governors were reminded that they are welcome to attend meetings of the Student Outcomes Task & Finish Group (next convening 11th October).

10. Curriculum Policy - annual review – Paper 005

Tim Rogers

The policy was approved by the Corporation.

11. Permanent exclusions from College

Andrew Jackson

11.1 Report on 2021-22 permanent exclusions – Paper 006

Governors noted the paper and asked questions about the general nature of the incidents leading to permanent exclusion.

11.2 Permanent Exclusion Policy – annual review – Paper 007

The policy was approved by the Corporation.

12. Admissions Policy - annual review - Paper 008

Donna Trusler

The policy was approved by the Corporation.

OVERSIGHT OF FINANCE, RESOURCES & ASSETS

13. 27 September Audit & Risk Committee recommendations

Wayne Allsopp

In Wayne's absence, Shelley Harvey kindly agreed to feedback to the Corporation on matters discussed by the Audit & Risk Committee:

- the Committee is committing to training on the ILR. It wants to better understand the internal controls which the College puts in place to ensure data is accurate.
- succession planning was discussed by the Committee and continues to be a concern. It is important to ensure there is a consistent quorum. Shelley appealed to other Governors to consider joining the Committee.
- the Committee supports a revision to procurement thresholds within the Financial Regulations to better reflect the inflation levels impacting spend in some of the College's core infrastructure departments. Financial Regulations are tabled at an appropriate time in the business cycle for Corporation meetings and Governors can expect to see changes in the next iteration.

14. Provisional July accounts – Paper 009

Carolyn Davies

The provisional outturn for the 2021/22 financial year is a deficit of £1,513k.

There are two matters that remain to be considered for adjustment in the final accounts for the year ended 31 July 2022 - the notional asset on the College's share of the LGPS pension scheme, and any impact in relation to the recently announced outcome of the Harper Trust vs Brazel case.

Carolyn highlighted the forecast outcome for the Phase 1B project costs within the Management accounts. These account for the full cost of the Phase 1B project across both the 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years. The final account is yet to be agreed and there are some works taking place in October half term, together with outstanding snagging following practical completion.

It was agreed at the Corporation's June 2022 meeting that the remaining balance of the College's bank loan be repaid. This was fully repaid in July 2022.

Provisional assessment of the College's financial health based on the July 2022 management accounts shows a Financial Health rating of Good.

Governors asked about the College's provision of budget to cover higher energy costs.

Carolyn confirmed information to date has been incorporated into the budget for 2022/23; revisions will be included in the revised budget for the year in the usual way.

15. Summer works programme and 2023 – Presentation

Carolyn Davies

Phase 1B work completed during summer 2022:

- further refurbishment of top floor of R building– BEF teaching rooms and staff areas
- consolidation of Computer Science/ICT teaching in the G Building and refurbishment of staff base
- refurbishment of Health and Sport staff bases
- relocation of EFL teaching and staff areas, bringing this team together at University Road
- access to the rear of the R Building
- replacement of lift in the R Building
- refurbishment of whole staff area in the R Building
- additional cycle storage at Regent Road

Phase 2A work planned for summer 2023:

- refurbishment of part of Ground Floor of the R Building
- consolidation of Humanities and Social Science
- Maths and English provision on both campuses; other curriculum areas brought together on a single campus
- estimated project cost of £1.6m; included in 2022/23 budget
- surveys planned for October half term
- planning on bringing forward activity where possible; timelines are tight

Post-16 Capacity Funding:

Carolyn reminded Governors that the last bid submitted in summer 2021 for Post-16 Capacity Funding was unsuccessful. The College intends submitting a bid to extend and refurbish C Building (represented in the Estates Master Plan, originally approved by the Corporation in June 2022, as package 3).

The specifics of the project are:

- 4-6 additional classrooms
- Secure courtyard; access through G Building
- Approximate gross internal floor area: 350-380m² new and 300-350m² refurbished. Total 650-730m²
- Estimated project cost in the region of £3m

The proposal would enable the College to allow for demographic growth in our travel to learn area. There is a clear evidence base for the College to draw on in terms of its recent student applications data and ONS data for which outlines there is a greater need for places than current capacity allows.

Carolyn explained the grant criteria and the weightings allocated including factors such as sustainability and match funding.

The Corporation was asked to consider match funding 20% of the proposed project cost, funded from College cash reserves.

Governors carefully considered the affordability of this 20% contribution from the College's cash reserves, after taking into account the significant capital projects funded entirely by the College in 2021, 2022 and proposed for 2023.

Governors queried how many additional students could be accommodated through the project. It was confirmed that approximately 150 additional students could be enrolled.

The bid deadline is 11th November 2022.

Works would have to be completed by 31st August 2024.

The Corporation voted on whether to submit the bid and approve match funding at the level indicated.

Approval was granted to proceed, with a 20% match funding contribution from the College's cash reserves.

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

18. Recommendations from 05 October Governance & Search Committee

Joyce Black

- The Governor Insights programme will run from after October half term to Easter 2023. The Committee reviewed some changes to the protocol and the accompanying pro formas and recommends the Corporation adopts these. The new protocol and the pro formas will be rolled out to Governors after half term.
- Governor skills audit - An extended deadline was provided for Governors to complete their skills audit. Joyce asked all Governors to ensure they complete the skills audit in future as it helps the Board to understand its skills profile and to identify any training and development required. The Committee considered the outcomes from the audit. The Committee proposed that Student Governors have a separate skills audit which they complete as a self-review of the competencies they have gained at the end of their tenure. The Clerk will draft this and it will be referred to the Governance & Search Committee in Spring 2023. The Audit & Risk

Committee will review the skills audit findings pertinent to the activity of the Committee at its next meeting.

- Self-review of governance 2021-22: the Clerk will email Governors prompting them to complete the annual review of governance. Joyce confirmed it was essential for all Governors to complete the self-review. The outcome of the review is formally reported to the regulator. The timeline for completion will be mid-November and the outcome will be reported to the Corporation at its December meeting.
- Governor recruitment- a prospective External Governor will be interviewed on 7th October. Parent Governor applications are live and to date two Parent Governor applications have been received. The closing date is 18th October and the interview date is 27th October. All applicants are interviewed as Parent Governors are appointed rather than elected. Joyce expressed thanks to fellow Governors for their support in the process.

Joyce reported on the volume of governance-related work which was in train or planned for the academic year, including the launch of a governance portal (GovernorHub), a training offer for Governors using ETF, AoC and SFCA training, and ongoing inductions for two External Governors, as well as on-boarding new External, Parent and Student Governors.

18.1 Membership of Committees 2022/23 - Paper 010

The Corporation noted and approved the Committee memberships for 2022/23.

19. Any Other Business

- 19.1** Annual returns are due and will be issued by the Clerk - Governors' annual code of conduct and declarations, annual declarations on Register of Interests, annual review of Governor biographies on website.
- 19.2** WQE Open Day takes place on Sat 5th November. Governors are encouraged to attend to speak to students, parents and staff and to see the College estate.
- 19.3** Governor questions focusing on the retention of a small supply of Covid tests should the pandemic spread during the winter months, and whether the College was noticing student drop-out due to the cost-of-living crisis.
- 19.4** The Chair invited the Student Governor present to comment on what he felt the College could do to support students in light of the recent unrest in the city. The Student Governor reported that the College could spread positivity through its messaging.

20. Confidentiality

Subject to discussions during the meeting, the Corporation considered the following papers to be confidential Safeguarding and PREVENT presentation (this contains specific reports on case numbers/types etc.), as well as the report on permanent exclusions for 2021/22 (Paper 006).

21. Next Meeting

Wednesday 16 November 2022, 17:00, Room G01, University Road campus.

Action List

	Actions arising from 29 June 2022 Corporation meeting	Who is responsible?	Date for completion
	EDI: to report back to Governors after the October 2022 half term on drilled down data relating to the category of 'other'.	DT	November 2022 Corporation meeting
	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: