

WQE & Regent College Group

Corporation Meeting 25 June 2025, 17:20, Room G01, University Road Campus

Members of the Corporation in attendance:

Philip Parkinson (Chair), Phillip Ashton, Joyce Black, Frances Bettsworth, Bernadette Green, Onkar Korotana, Neil McGhee, Adeola Obadan, Nikki O'Brien, Hasan Peerbhai, Jim Phillips, Alison Stone, Sarah Thomson, Paul Wilson & Jimmy Zachariah

Observer: Iain McKenzie

Other attendees:

Carolyn Davies, Andrew Jackson, Rachel Middleton, Sarah Oldfield, Tim Rogers & Donna Trusler

PART A MEETING MINUTES

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the open Corporation meeting. The Chair informed the Corporation that the External and Parent Governors had just held a closed meeting where observations and any recommendations from the panels who conducted interim performance reviews of Senior Postholders (the Principal and Director of Governance) were heard. Governors noted that the closed meeting took place and minutes will be produced, however the Remuneration Committee meeting itself, scheduled for 18th June was cancelled, as quoracy could not be secured. The Chair thanked the Governors who were involved in the review panels with the Chair – Joyce and Sarah T.

The Chair welcomed Carolyn to her last meeting of the Corporation before she retires.

The Chair also welcomed Jim and Neil for whom this was also their last Corporation meeting.

The Chair welcomed Frances who is stepping down early as Teaching Staff Governor due to family commitments from the new academic year. Frances' tenure concludes on 31 August 2025.

The Chair informed the Corporation that the Director of Governance would be opening Teaching Staff Governor nominations/elections in the autumn term.

The Chair stated that Nikki would be stepping down as a Governor with immediate effect, given work pressures.

The Chair thanked all outgoing Governors for their significant contributions.

The Chair confirmed this was his last Corporation meeting as he steps down on 31 August 2025.

A presentation followed the Corporation meeting to celebrate Governors' contributions.

2. Declarations of Interest

Sarah T declared an interest with regards to nomination as Chair – agenda item 12.2.

3. Minutes and matters arising – Paper 001

To approve the minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 09 April 2025 as a correct record. To review the matters arising captured in the action list.

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of proceedings. The two actions from the action list had been completed during the intervening period between meetings. The Chair thanked Iain for proactively liaising with Sarah O and Carolyn respectively, and for sharing insights.

Additionally Andrew confirmed to the Corporation that the Accountability Statement 2025-26 had been uploaded to the DfE.

OVERSIGHT OF STRATEGIC DIRECTION

4. Principal's Update – Paper 002

Paul Wilson

The Principal's update covered:

- Student recruitment, participation and engagement
- Student performance and progression
- HR and staffing
- Finance and efficiency
- Quality, teaching and operational service
- Facilities, investment and capital
- Appointment of new CFO & Associate Principal
- Anticipation of a Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper in the autumn
- Launch of the proposed new Ofsted framework planned for November 2025

OVERSIGHT OF STUDENT EXPERIENCES, CURRICULUM & OUTCOMES

5. Minutes, executive actions and recommendations from the Student Experience, Curriculum & Outcomes Committee meeting 14.05.25

Bernie Green (SECO Chair)

5.1 Draft minutes from SECO Committee – Paper 003 – *For noting*

The Corporation noted the draft minutes.

5.2 Actions, recommendations & feedback from Committee Chair – Verbal update

Bernie provided an overview of the papers covered during the meeting and requests for papers from ELT for the autumn meeting.

Bernie referenced the fact that there would be a number of new Committee members for the 2025-26 academic year and as a result ELT's executive summaries would need to be more expansive and there may need to be a learning/briefing element at the start of every Committee agenda to upskill

Governors.

The Director of Governance confirmed that this would be a model across all of the committees for the year ahead to assimilate Governors effectively into committees.

6. Equality and Diversity Annual Report – Paper 004 - *For approving*

Donna Trusler

The Chair stated that Donna had reached out to Joyce for a Governor perspective on language and tone, in keeping with usual practice.

Governor data will be reported for the period in a report by the Director of Governance to the Governance & Search Committee on 1st

October, in a broad paper looking at diversifying the Board and comparing WQE to national findings about Governor demographics. Governors also noted that anonymised Governors' data is submitted through an annual return to DfE as part of the FE Workforce Survey.

Donna confirmed that the data highlighted that staff recruitment was diverse.

The Student Executive would like to monitor diversity and also offer mentoring to peers.

The annual Culture Day was successful last year in showcasing world cultures and celebrating diversity and inclusion. The event for 2024-25 was scheduled for the following week and Governors were invited.

Donna reported that the HR department were focusing on being proactive in their recruitment activity around diversity and inclusivity and this was positively impacting on recruitment of minority applicants.

With regards to student data, Governors asked about progress in identifying students who had been Pupil Premium students at secondary school and monitoring how many of these students were admitted to the College and how they progressed during their time at College. Donna confirmed that this was now activity which the College was undertaking.

OVERSIGHT OF FINANCE, RESOURCES & ASSETS

7. Minutes, executive actions and recommendations from the Finance & Resources Committee meeting 21.05.25

Philip Parkinson (F&R Chair)

7.1 Draft minutes from F&R Committee – Paper 005 – *For noting*

The Corporation noted the draft minutes.

7.2 Actions, recommendations & feedback from Committee Chair – verbal update

Philip provided an update on the areas considered by the Committee.

The Chair confirmed that two new sets of management accounts had been uploaded to GovernorHub (April and May) and that Governors had been notified by the Director of Governance to this effect. The F&R Committee reviewed the management accounts for the period ended 31 March 2025 in detail. It is incumbent upon all Governors to look at the management accounts when notified and to raise any matters with Carolyn in this instance and with the incoming CFO & Associate Principal moving forward.

7.3 Noting requirement for an Interim Committee Chair

The Chair confirmed to the Corporation that there was a need for an interim Chair for the Finance & Resources Committee and that any Governor wishing to find out more should contact the Director of Governance over the summer.

8. Three-Year Financial Plan– Paper 006 - *For information and questions*

Carolyn Davies

The paper included the latest forecast for 2024/25, the budget for 2025/26 and an illustrative forecast for 2026/27 (based on the 5 years forecasts considered by the Corporation in April 2025). The commentary will be submitted to the DfE to accompany the CFFR by 31 July 2025. The budget for 2025/26 shows a deficit of £112k. The April 2025 '5-year financial forecasts' paper showed a deficit of £410k in 2025/26. The key changes relate to different assumptions for 16-18 funding and pay settlements. The College had received its updated 16-18 funding allocation for 2025-26 today, which would lead to a small improvement in the budget position. This will be reflected in the revised budget for 2025-26, which will be considered by the Corporation in the autumn term.

Governors were asked to:

- Review the paper to ensure understanding of the College's current financial position
- Approve the budget for 2025/26
- Approve the financial objectives for 2025/26
- Approve the Commentary for submission to the DfE
- Note the relationship between the forecast for 2026/27 and the financial stability measures. Governors were reminded that careful consideration will be needed when approving future capital projects, dependant on the actual cash generated by the College's operations and the availability of capital grant funding
- Note the updated FE Commissioner financial benchmarks in section 5.

The Principal reminded Governors about the lagged funding model for Colleges.

Governor asked questions about the impact of pay and cost of living increases on the budget.

Governors approved the budget, financial objectives and commentary.

9. Health & Safety Policy 2025-26 – Paper 007 – For approval

Carolyn Davies

The Chair informed Governors that this is an annually refreshed and renewed policy which the Corporation has to approve and that this policy requires a signature from the Chair. Governors were asked to note their formal responsibilities under section 2.1 – page 7.

Carolyn confirmed that key changes to the policy were outlined on the policy cover sheet. She confirmed the College's Health & Safety Committee had reviewed the changes.

Carolyn expressed thanks to Anita Taylor for all of her contributions to health and safety at the College and noted that there are a suite of supporting procedures sitting under the parent Health & Safety Policy.

Governors asked about the new procedure for College lockdown. Carolyn reported that this process had been tested and with some very useful learning for the College as a result.

Governors asked questions about when the policy had last been subject to external assurance and suggested this be included in the 2025-26 external assurance programme. **Action CD/DI**

The Chair reminded all Governors that there was an opportunity for them to raise any substantive matters they considered should be included in the external assurance programme.

AUDIT, RISK AND EXTERNAL ASSURANCE

10. Minutes, executive actions and recommendations from the Audit & Risk Committee meeting 10.06.25

Neil McGhee

10.1 Draft A&R Committee minutes - Paper 008

The Corporation noted the draft minutes from the Committee.

10.2 Actions, recommendations & feedback from Committee Chair – Verbal update

Neil provided a verbal update from the Committee meeting.

10.3 Recommendation of Interim Committee Chair

The Corporation appointed Joyce Black as Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee.

The appointment will be immediate as Neil's term of office as Governor concludes in June 2025.

EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

11. Minutes, executive actions and recommendations from the Governance & Search Committee meeting 07.05.25

11.1 Draft G&S Committee minutes - Paper 009

The Corporation noted the draft minutes from the Committee.

11.2 Actions, recommendations & feedback from Committee Chair – Verbal update

Joyce chaired the Governance & Search Committee meeting in Sarah Thomson's absence.

Joyce provided a verbal update on matters considered by the Committee.

11.3 Revised Governor Insights Protocol – Paper 010

Joyce outlined why changes to the insights protocol had been implemented – to better reflect the availability of Governors, who, in a revised Corporation composition, were now almost all working full time.

The Corporation approved the revised Governor Insights Protocol.

11.4 Governance meeting planner for 2025-26 – Paper 011

Governors approved the meeting planner for the academic year ahead.

12. Nominations

Rachel Middleton

12.1 Chair of Corporation

Sarah Thomson left the meeting room.

The Director of Governance outlined the steps in the process undertaken to date in relation to nominations for the role as Corporation Chair.

She stated that there had been one nomination and that the next step was for the Corporation to approve the appointment of Sarah Thomson as Chair of the Corporation.

The Corporation approved the appointment.

Sarah re-entered the meeting room and the Chair thanked her for undertaking the Chair role.

Induction and handover will ensue.

12.2 Opening nominations for Vice Chair

The Corporation approved the process for nominating Vice Chair or Co-Vice Chair nominations.

The Director of Governance will circulate the role profile to eligible Governors on 27 June.

There will be a fortnight's period in which Governors can express an interest to the Director of Governance in the role as Vice Chair. Both parties will have a discussion about the role. If the candidate then wishes to progress to a nomination, they will then have a discussion with the outgoing and incoming Chair who will confirm how to submit a nomination.

All nominations will need to be received over the summer and the aim is to approve the candidate in the short formal meeting of the Corporation which will take place on 17 September, the same date as the Governor kickstart meeting. Any election, should there be multiple candidates wishing to stand as Vice Chair (as opposed to two candidates wishing to share Co-Vice Chair roles), will take place prior to 17

September 2025.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS - For approval
(Not for discussion unless requested in advance)

13. Audit, Risk and External Assurance:

- 13.1 Risk Register and significant risks action plan** – Paper CAa001
- 13.2 External Audit Plan for 2024-25** - Paper CAa002
- 13.3 Board assurance framework including programme of external assurance 2025-26** – Paper CAa003

The Corporation approved all of the papers above.

14. Finance, Resources & Assets:

- 14.1 Financial Regulations** - Paper CAa004
- 14.2 Procurement Policy** – Paper CAa005

The Corporation approved all of the papers above.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS - For noting
(Not for discussion unless requested in advance)

15. Student Experiences, Curriculum and Outcomes:

- 15.1 Teaching, learning and assessment annual report** – Paper CAn001
- 15.2 Course evaluation questionnaire** – Paper CAn002
- 15.3 Forecasting Student Outcomes** – Paper CAn003
- 15.4 Prevention of Sexual Abuse Action Plan** – Paper CAn004
- 15.5 Development of Young Professionals and Skills Accountability Update 2024-25** – Paper CAn005
- 15.6 PREVENT Risk Register** – Paper CAn006

The Corporation noted all of the papers above.

16. Finance, Resources and Assets:

- 16.1 Staff Wellbeing Strategy** – Paper CAn007
- 16.2 Staff Wellbeing Update** – Paper CAn008
- 16.3 Staffing Profile – Age** – Paper CAn009
- 16.4 Sustainability strategy update** – Paper CAn010

The Corporation noted all of the papers above.

17. Audit, Risk and External Assurance:

- 17.1 External Auditor KPIs** – Paper CAn011
- 17.2 External assurance reports 2024-25** – Paper CAn012
- 17.3 Emerging Issues Report (RSM UK Ltd)** – Paper CAn013

The Corporation noted all of the papers above.

ROUND-UP

18. AoB

The Director of Governance will contact each Governor about committee Memberships for 2025-26 over the summer period.

Joyce Black reported that she had been approved as a member of the SFCA's national Council and will also continue to serve on their Governance Policy Committee. The Chair thanked her for her commitment.

19. Confidentiality

The Corporation considered the following papers to be confidential:

- Risk Register
- PREVENT Risk Register
- Budget
- Staffing age profile
- Board assurance papers for 2024-25

20. Next meeting dates:

- Governor Kickstart meeting – 17th September 2025, 5pm
The Chair confirmed that this will be informal in style but will also have a short extraordinary meeting to approve nominations as well as cover any urgent matters which cannot wait for the November Corporation meeting.
- Corporation meeting – 19th November 2025, 5pm

Action Plan

Actions from the meeting on 25 th June 2025		Who is responsible?	Date for completion
Seek external assurance of the College's Health & Safety Policy		CD/DI	tbc
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	