

WQE & Regent College Group

Meeting 09 April 2025, 17:00, Room G01, University Road Campus

Members of the Corporation present:

Philip Parkinson (Chair), Joyce Black, Frances Bettsworth, Bernadette Green, Jim Phillips, Alison Stone, Sarah Thomson, Paul Wilson

Other attendees:

Carolyn Davies, Andrew Jackson, Rachel Middleton, Tim Rogers, Donna Trusler, Phillip Ashton (prospective External Governor), Onkar Korotana (prospective External Governor), Iain McKenzie (prospective External Governor), Adeola Obadan (prospective External Governor), Hasan Peerbhai (prospective External Governor)

Apologies:

Neil McGhee, Nikki O'Brien, Sarah Oldfield & Jimmy Zachariah

MINUTES

1. **Welcome and apologies for absence and Chair's actions taken**

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Neil McGhee, Nikki O'Brien, Sarah Oldfield & Jimmy Zachariah. The Chair confirmed this was the first meeting for prospective Governors, a number of whom had attended the February Governors' Conference as Observers. A warm welcome was extended to them. The Chair confirmed that each new Governor would introduce themselves and then would need to step out of the room whilst the Corporation discussed appointments.

The Chair confirmed that all committees had met during the period preceding the meeting with the exception of the Audit & Risk Committee which does not have a Spring meeting. Minutes of committee meetings can be found in the Consent Agenda section of the meeting papers. This is a new feature on agendas as well as a section called items for Governor Reference and Learning. The purpose of the latter section is to ensure that all Governors are apprised of information to enable them to fulfil their collective duties irrespective of the committee(s) on which they sit. Governors were asked to note that executive summaries are now being used and these have been positively welcomed at committees thus far.

Governors were reminded that committees look at matters in granular detail. The Finance & Resources Committee considers the latest set of finance financial management reports whenever it convenes. However, all Governors have a responsibility to check management accounts via GovernorHub every month and the Director of Governance will prompt Governors when these become available.

The Corporation noted decisions taken by Chair's action during the intervening period between Corporation meetings, relating to pay awards for teaching and support staff respectively. These decisions were ratified by the Corporation.

2. Declarations of Interest

Sarah Thomson in relation to item 12.1.

3. Governor appointments

Sarah Thomson

3.1 Parent Governor

3.2 External Governors

The Vice Chair of Governors reminded the Corporation that there were five new Governor positions to consider at this meeting and that she would invite each prospective Governor to provide a short introduction and then step out of the room. Sarah confirmed that Adeola Obadan was standing for the role of Parent Governor and Hasan Peerbhai, Phill Ashton, Iain McKenzie and Onkar Korotana were standing as External Governors.

Before the Corporation deliberated, Sarah confirmed that prospective candidates had been interviewed and scored using a standard template. This had been a very positive experience for all Governors involved and Sarah thanked Philip, Paul and Nikki for their service.

The Corporation welcomed all new Governors back into the room and confirmed the appointment of all five positions, subject to DBS and Section 128 checks. The Chair confirmed that in the interim, the five Governors would be non-voting Observers.

The Chair thanked all new Governors for their applications and commented on the apparent success of the recent Governor recruitment campaign.

4. Minutes and matters arising – Paper 001

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2024 were approved as a correct record.

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

- Make some minor word amendments to the Exec summary of SAR and QIP
- Governors to send feedback and comments to TR in relation to the SAR

This action was covered on the agenda and subsequently removed from the action list:

- Delegate responsibility to G&S Committee on 15.01.25 to revise Committee Terms of Reference further.

5. Minutes of closed meeting on 18 December 2024

The minutes of the closed meeting were approved by External Governors present at the meeting, having been circulated in advance of the meeting by email.

OVERSIGHT OF STRATEGIC DIRECTION

6. **Principal's Update and outcomes of the Governor Conference** – Paper 002

Paul Wilson

Highlights from the update included:

- Strategic Plan development updates
- An example of how the strategic KPI work had further developed
- Recent successes and key developments
- Condition and sustainability updates
- Capital estates project – C Block update
- Update on the status of the Ofsted consultation
- Update on the status of the Curriculum & Assessment Review
- Potential changes to political and administrative areas locally

Governors noted that there had been a recent change affecting the Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Partnership (LLEP), which ceases and is broadly replaced by a Business and Skills Board that is jointly overseen by the two Local Authorities. The Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and the Local Skills Accountability Board (LSAB) continue under the leadership of the Chamber of Commerce at this stage at least. The Principal also reported that he had been invited to join a new Leicester Convening Partnership Steering Group, bringing together most of the larger Multi-Academy Trusts to work collaboratively on matters including skills and employer engagement

7. **Proposals for 2025/26 Accountability Agreement** – Paper 003

Andrew Jackson

Andrew confirmed that the Accountability Statement forms part of the College's funding agreement. The statement for 2025-26 needs to be in place by the end of June 2025.

Governors noted the contextual summary about the College's followed by the table outlining the targets the College planned for the 2025-26 academic year.

Governors asked questions and made observations about:

- whether the information within the agreement could be used to better promote the College
- striving for continuous excellence versus maintaining approaches/focus for 2025-26
- encouraging students to apply to the best university which meets their own needs balanced with encouraging local HEI applicants who will proceed in future to add value to the local skills market;
- availability of degree apprenticeships and interest from students in pursuit of these.

Andrew sought approval from the Corporation and this was granted.

OVERSIGHT OF STUDENT EXPERIENCES, CURRICULUM & OUTCOMES

8. Executive actions and recommendations from the Student Experience, Curriculum & Outcomes Committee meeting 12.02.25

Bernie Green (SECO Chair)

Bernie provided a verbal summary of the substantive matters discussed at the Committee meeting.

9. SAR Quality Improvement Update – progress in priority areas - Paper 004

Tim Rogers

Tim informed the Corporation that there were sixteen QIPs sitting under the overarching QIP, at departmental level – 9 of which relate to teaching and 7 to support functions. Each of these has a standard format.

Tim confirmed that reference to the work of an Improvement Panel could be found within the SECO minutes from the February meeting.

Governors asked questions about development of student voice, work on quality assuring/moderating teacher assessment levels, whether improvement panels could be rolled out to other areas where student retention levels were high but achievement rates were lower than expected, the development of oracy skills through small group working; and the legacy impact of missing education due to Covid.

Tim confirmed that the Course Evaluation Questionnaire would be tabled at the May SECO meeting.

A report on the SAR and QIP will also be tabled at the May SECO meeting.

OVERSIGHT OF FINANCE, RESOURCES & ASSETS

10. Executive actions and recommendations from the Finance & Resources Committee meeting 11.03.25

Philip Parkinson (F&R Chair)

Philip provided a verbal summary of the substantive matters discussed at the Committee meeting.

Iain McKenzie offered support looking at the HR data dashboard. **Action SO and IMcK:** to arrange a meeting to discuss this further.

The Chair drew attention to the Treasury Management Policy which had been discussed in granular detail at the Committee meeting and asked the Corporation to approve it.

10.1 Treasury Management Policy – Paper 005 - For approval

The policy was approved.

11. Five-year financial forecasts – Paper 006

Carolyn Davies

Governors were asked to note key assumptions made within forecasts and therefore the strategic financial position for the five- year period under review, to inform strategic decision making in the future.

They were asked to note the forecast cash balances and key financial ratios at the end of the five-year period and invited to consider the impact this will have on future approval of major capital projects.

Finally, the Corporation was asked to note capital project updates, including key risks and future plans and were updated on future planning timelines and options for future capital funding, though access to further capital grants seemed limited in the near future.

Carolyn explained the lagged funding model to new Governors.

EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

12. Executive actions and recommendations from the Governance & Search Committee meetings 15.01.25 and 19.03.25

Sarah Thomson

Sarah provided a verbal summary of the substantive matters discussed at both Spring meetings of the Committee.

She gave a verbal update on Student Governor recruitment in light of major developments to the Student Executive in terms of inclusivity, engagement and potential to impact positively on the student experience.

Sarah reported on the development of the Governor Recruitment Pack and the campaign which ensued. She recommended to the Corporation that there be a hiatus in new Governor recruitment until the early autumn to enable five new Governors to assimilate into the Corporation and to undertake a skills audit to identify skills and knowledge gaps to inform future recruitment.

Sarah reported on activity to overhaul the induction plan to on-board new Governors under a revised governance model.

12.1 Arrangements for nomination of Chair and Vice Chair – Paper 007- For approval

Rachel Middleton

Rachel outlined the detail within the paper. The Corporation approved opening nominations for Chair straight away and deferring opening Vice or Co-Vice Chair nominations until after the Governors' kickstart meeting.

12.2 Governance policies

Rachel Middleton

12.2.1 Attendance at Meetings and Access to Information Policy – Paper 008

12.2.2 Governor Training & Development Policy and Plan – Paper 009

Both policies were approved by the Corporation, having been recommended by the Governance & Search Committee. The Chair of the Corporation affirmed that any policies relating specifically to Governor behaviours and action will always feature on the main body of agendas, rather

than as consent agenda items as it is imperative that all Governors are aware of policies pertaining to themselves as a collective and individually.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

(Not for discussion unless requested in advance)

13. College policies for re-approval (subject to 2-week post-meeting review protocol)

13.1 Disciplinary Policy & Procedure (SO) – Paper 010

13.2 Grievance Policy & Procedure (SO) – Paper 011

13.3 Student Guidance and Intervention Policy & Procedures (DT) – Paper 012

All policies were noted by the Corporation and will enter the fortnight feedback cycle whereby any Governors can raise any queries directly with policy authors, beyond which point the policies will be approved by default unless any substantive changes made mean the policy should be re-tabled.

14. Efficient and effective governance:

14.1 Approved terms of reference for Committees and all Business Plans – Paper 013

Terms of reference were approved by the Corporation.

14.2 Draft Committee minutes – F&R Committee, G&S Committee, SECO Committee – Papers 014 a-c

Minutes were noted by the Corporation and will be approved by the respective Committees at their next meetings.

ROUND-UP

15. AoB

Iain McKenzie offered to provide some feedback to Carolyn Davies in relation to the Treasury Management Policy. **Action IM**

16. Confidentiality – There were no confidential matters.

17. Next meeting dates to note

- Governance & Search Committee – 5pm, Weds 7th May
- Student Experiences, Curriculum & Outcomes Committee – 5pm, Weds 14th May
- Finance & Resources Committee, 5pm, Weds 21st May
- Audit & Risk Committee, 5pm, Tues 10th June
- Remuneration Committee, 5pm, Weds 18th June
- Corporation- 5pm, Weds 25th June

FOR GOVERNOR REFERENCE AND LEARNING

18. Management accounts – 31 January 2025 - Paper 015

19. Landscaping Masterplan – UR Campus– Paper 016

Governors noted the availability of the two papers above on GovernorHub under the dedicated section relating to Governor reference and learning.

Action Plan

Actions from the meeting on 9th April 2025	Who is responsible?	Date for completion
Iain McKenzie to work with Sarah Oldfield on the HR data dashboard	IM and SO	ASAP
Iain McKenzie to liaise with Carolyn Davies in relation to feedback on the Treasury Management Policy	IM and CD	ASAP
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: