

**Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held at 9.15am on 18th October 2024 in
Room 3-10, Aylesbury Campus**

Governors Present	Ian Greggor (Vice Chair) (Acting Chair for Meeting)	Ian Harper	Karina Rovdanikaite (Student Governor)
	Jenny Craig (Principal & CEO)	Iain Brown	Tim Marshall
	Amir Khaki	John Boyle	Tomas Pukalski
	Cathie Prest	Martina Porter	Victoria Topham
In Attendance	John McGrath (Chief Operating Officer (COO))		
	Hannah James (Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality (VPCQ))		
	Tracey Matthews (Vice Principal Commercial & Partnerships (VPCP))		
	Rachael Murray (Executive Director Digital Transformation & Planning (EDDTP))		
	Nicky Ellis (Assistant Principal Student Engagement & Support (APSES))		
	Isobel Ellison (Executive Director Human Resources (EDHR))		
	Anna Smith (Director of Governance (DG))		
Apologies	Martin Tugwell	Sarah Mason	Adam Poland
	Chris Oakley	Jessica Nathanielsz	Alex Reynolds

Minute No.	AGENDA ITEM
35.24	<p>CHAIR'S WELCOME</p> <p>Apologies were noted and the Acting Chair welcomed all to the meeting and strategy day ahead. In particular Karina Rovdanikaite, Victoria Topham, John Boyle and Iain Brown were welcomed to their first meeting as new members of the Corporation.</p> <p>There were no new declarations of interest relating to items of discussion. The meeting was quorate.</p>
36.24	<p>DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE REPORT</p> <p>The Corporation Resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratify the written resolution email approvals of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tomas Pukalski as a Member of the Finance and Resources Committee with effect from 19/9/24 as approved by email on 19/9/24. ○ The appointment of Kier Construction to take on the completion of the Pre-Construction Services Agreement activity for the new build as approved by email on 9/10/24. • Approve the recommendations of the Search & Governance Committee as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The appointment of Karina Rovdanikaite and Jessica Nathanielsz as Members of the Curriculum, Quality & Students Committee with effect from 18/10/24. ○ The adoption of the revised Code of Conduct for Corporation Members with immediate effect. ○ The Scheme of Delegation reviewed and agreed fit for purpose. • Note the reminder of the Seven Principles of Public Life (Nolan Principles) which governors abide by in accordance with the adoption of the Code of Conduct and Code of Good Governance. • Note the final progress review update of the External Board Review Action Plan. Positive feedback was noted from the reviewer on receipt of the final action plan update. Governors praised the progress, the final report would be published on the college website and the Interim Chair thanked all involved for the speed of implementing improvements. • Note the governor links and engagement record for 2024-25 to date. The DG reminded governors that managers have been asked to invite students to share in link meeting conversations. <p>The DG reminded governors that completion of the Board Self-Assessment Review and Chair Appraisal were due by 25/10/24 (Action: All governors in office throughout 2023-24).</p>
37.24	<p>MINUTES AND BOARD ASSURANCE REPORTS</p> <p>The Corporation Resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 3/7/24.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the updated rolling actions noting all actions had been completed or were in hand. • Note the report and draft minutes of the Finance & Resources Committee meeting held on 25/9/24. • Note the report and draft minutes of the Search & Governance Committee meeting held on 26/9/24.
38.24	<p>STUDENT GOVERNOR REPORT</p> <p>The student governor took members through the report introducing herself and her fellow student governor and feeding back on the hugely successful Fresher’s Fair which had been supported by various local clubs and community organisations. Governors also received an update on the students qualified as Youth Mental Health Champions supporting peers with safe spaces to communicate and share experiences.</p> <p>In terms of enrichment clubs, the student governor voiced the need for an increase at the Amersham and Flackwell Heath campuses and it was agreed this is being considered with more clubs already running since the start of year. Governors were briefed on an exciting opportunity planned for half term week supported by Thames Valley Police where a music video will be produced as part of the High Sheriff Champions domestic abuse project to be used as a future teaching resources across college.</p> <p>Query was raised by one of the new governors seeking assurance of how the Board knows actions are followed up on student feedback. The Principal and APSES confirmed the process of gaining student feedback through various routes, sharing with relevant departments and ensuring actions are taken on a ‘you said, we did’ basis.</p> <p>The Acting Chair thanked the student governor for briefing the Board and welcomed students supporting each other alongside staff on mental health.</p>
39.24	<p>KPI REPORT</p> <p>Since papers were circulated, classroom-based achievement has improved (now 84.5%). In scrutinising the 2023-24 year-end position and the proposed 2024-25 targets the following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GCSE English and maths grades are hard to compare with previous years given the new strategy adopted last year to now include grade 4 rather than just grade 3. The team acknowledge improvement is needed and this is a significant focus for 2024-25. • Governors were pleased to note there has been a significant improvement in work experience. • The target for attendance has been set at 90% which is challenging but set as a single target for clarity across provision. Query was raised at the stretch of the target for the college and assurance was provided that this single target ensures all students understand the ambition to achieve. The VPCQ offered, and governors welcomed, to report back on the more granular detail of students achieving attendance targets (Action: VPCQ). • GCSE statistics were contextualised by informing governors 34% of 16- to 18-year-olds come to college without English and maths GCSEs, a significantly high proportion compared with a national average of 31%. • Assurance was sought, and provided, that there is sufficient provision for ensuring student attendance; it is the key priority for Progress Coaches and an all-staff responsibility to support. • Discussion took place regarding the main causes for attendance issues. It is nationally a post covid phenomenon which all schools and colleges are facing; complex and multi-faceted and largely due to increased mental health concerns. The team is confident the significantly large proportion of students will meet the 90% attendance target and those who find this challenging will have individual targets based on starting point. • The student governor raised the importance of ensuring staff wellbeing and satisfaction as positive staff attitudes and the desire to teach impact on student engagement in lessons. <p><i>Martina Porter joined the meeting at 9.50am.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors queried what support they can offer relating to any transport issues students were having affecting attendance. The issue also affects adults not in work or education and any lobbying governors are able to do is appreciated (Action: Governors).

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors commended the positive destination data which is ultimately what the college works to achieve for students. • Governors also praised high classroom retention. • The suggestion of exploring potential links with e-bike/zip scooters companies providing facilities closer to campuses was welcomed, particularly incorporating into the new build. The student governor noted cost implications could deter some students and a reminder was made of the bursary fund on offer. • Governors suggested data be captured on how students travel to college. The student governor confirmed the Autumn student survey includes this and it was agreed this would be analysed moving forward. <p>The Corporation Resolved to Note the 2023-24 year-end position and Approve the 2024-25 KPI targets.</p>
40.24	<p>PRINCIPAL'S REPORT</p> <p>An update on a confidential matter is recorded in the confidential minutes (minute 46.24).</p> <p>Governor queries raised in relation to the report prompted the following discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is unclear at present how Skills England will impact apprenticeship provision, particularly financially for the college, as the finer details regarding levy payments are not yet known. The college's provision is dominated by construction apprenticeships which are a strong route into employment and there is little change foreseen with employers in this field. The college is now part of a county-wide group looking at the Buckinghamshire apprenticeship offer, working collaboratively with other providers on meeting the needs of employers. • The college is doing all it can to influence the decision around increased funding for colleges, all local MPs have been contacted and meetings have taken place with some to ensure support. • Governors were pleased to see progress with the 'swap don't drop' initiative supporting students to be on the right course for them. • Staff shortages continue to be a significant challenge and concern was noted on the amount of lesson cover required by curriculum managers. This is a sector-wide issue and recruitment efforts remain a high priority. <p>The Corporation Resolved to Note the report.</p>
41.24	<p>CURRICULUM, QUALITY AND STUDENTS REPORT</p> <p>The VPCQ provided governors with an update on the most recent data since the report was published. Achievement rates are now 85.4% overall and thanks was noted to the MIS team for the significant amount of work in finalising data. 16-18 achievement is now at 81.4% (on national average) which is very positive given the starting points for the college's cohort. 19+ are at 90.2% which is well above average and an improvement on last year. Level 1, 2 and 3 are all now achieving above national average. While the gap is closing, there is still lower achievement in students with mixed ethnicity and this is being considered strategically to ensure support.</p> <p>Governor queries raised in relation to the report prompted the following discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors welcomed the report with clear data reporting and narrative. • The rag rating for safeguarded students was explained, rag rated according to crisis level. It was agreed a key would be added to future reports to clarify (Action: APSES). • The increase in safeguarding numbers has various reasons, including improved reporting. Mental health champions (staff and student champions) are encouraging students to talk about issues and seek support. • The student governor noted an increase in awareness of work experience would be helpful for students, particularly those in their first year to become engaged from the start of their courses. She suggested students be given options and ideas on what work experience can entail to prompt greater engagement. The executive team welcomed this, noting the impact of last year's improved strategy should be seen more this year with increased awareness in tutorials etc. The VPCQ explained the initiatives running this year, including Velocity during work readiness week and awareness for parents and carers to increase their support for students.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors sought feedback on the relocation of Sport and Public Services from Flackwell Heath to Aylesbury campus and assurance was provided that the move had been positive and students supported with funding for travel where required. • In terms of the 14 to 16 year old procedures in the safeguarding policy, the college does have a small number of students in this cohort. <p>The Corporation Resolved to Note the report and Approve the Safeguarding, Child Protection & Vulnerable Adults and Prevent Policy 2024-25 and the Student Performance Management Procedures 2024-25.</p>
42.24	<p>FINANCE AND RESOURCES REPORT</p> <p>The financial position had been scrutinised by the Finance and Resources Committee at its meeting on 25/9/24. Governors were pleased to note the target budget had been met. The main risk is the college’s subcontracting provision but governors were reminded of the strategic intention to reduce reliance on subcontracting.</p> <p>Governor queries raised in relation to the report prompted the following discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors commended the increasingly positive financial position and recognised the amount of effort in achieving this. The COO confirmed his commitment that initiatives to support the student experience throughout the year would be supported financially. • In terms of renewable energy and considering the use of heat pumps and alternatives, discussion took place regarding requirements and design work involved in working out the best approach. The college needs to ensure the solution chosen meets criteria of the Salix funding achieved. Discussion took place regarding the expenditure versus meeting social responsibility and green commitment and similar issues are present at other education providers facing such difficult decisions. The Principal confirmed the college’s commitment to improving sustainability moving forward. Governors noted this is a key agenda for young people and important for future proofing the curriculum for students going into employment. In terms of governance structure and oversight of this, the Finance & Resources Committee oversee the estate and the CQS committee oversee how sustainability is woven into the curriculum. • Governors were invited to visit the ground floor of the campus to appreciate the modernisation plans to improve student, staff and visitor experience. • Governors Approved the request for the Financial Regulations to be reviewed by the Finance & Resources Committee in November prior to review and approval at the December Corporation meeting (Action: COO). <p>The Corporation Resolved to Note the report and Approve the Health & Safety Policy 2024-25 and Health & Safety Statement.</p>
43.24	<p>WORKFORCE UPDATE REPORT</p> <p>In addition to the report the EDHR informed governors of the targeted retention incentive scheme (previously levelling up payments) put in place to encourage people in industry to move into education.</p> <p>Governor queries raised in relation to the report prompted the following discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The increase in staff disciplinaries is largely due to improvements following manager training. Assurance was provided that cases are not related to poor service for students. • Governors queried whether there is an underlying cause or any trend analysis pointing to an issue in staffing. The Principal confirmed higher expectations are being set for staff and tackling under-performance has improved but this can contribute to staff shortages which presents short term challenges but sets the right direction of travel for improved service longer term. The positive assurance was welcomed by governors who recognised the challenges for the sector. • The student governor queried mental health wellbeing initiatives for staff in order to ensure a positive outlook for students. The EDHR outlined the initiatives for supporting staff wellbeing including wellness action plans for managers and employees to have direct conversations and ensure support.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors suggested such positive initiatives and assurances be included in the report and this was taken on board for future reporting (Action: EDHR). • The Acting Chair suggested more time on the agenda be devoted to the workforce report to ensure sufficient focus on staff matters (Action: DG). <p>The Corporation Resolved to Note the report and Approve the Pensions Scheme Statement.</p>
44.24	<p>FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION POLICY</p> <p>The Corporation Resolved to Approve the Freedom of Expression Policy 2024-26.</p>
45.24	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>5th December 2024</p> <p>The Acting Chair thanked the Student Governor for attending and the meeting moved to confidential business at 10.55am.</p> <p><i>Karina Rovdanikaite left the meeting at 10.55am.</i></p> <p>Following the confidential item (recorded separately), the meeting ended at 11.30am.</p>

Approved as an accurate record of discussion: 5th December 2024