

Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held at 6pm on 27th March 2024 in Room 3-22, Aylesbury Campus

Governors Present	Martin Tugwell (Chair)	Amir Khaki	Chris Oakley
	Jenny Craig (Principal & CEO)	Ben Banks (student)	Martina Porter
	Adam Poland (staff)	Bethan Waters	Sarah Mason
	Alex Reynolds (staff)	Cathie Prest	Tim Marshall
In Attendance	John McGrath (Chief Operating Officer (COO))		
	Hannah James (Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality (VPCQ))		
	Rachael Murray (Executive Director Digital Transformation & Planning (EDDTP))		
	Nicky Ellis (Assistant Principal Student Engagement & Support (APSES))		
	Anna Smith (Director of Governance (DG))		
	Tomas Pukalski (Observing as incoming Governor)		
Apologies	David Bainton	Ian Greggor	Sana Larkin
	Eddie Weiss	Ian Harper	Tracey Matthews
	Isobel Ellison		

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01.24	A video of student and staff successes put together by the VPCQ played on arrival which was highly welcomed allowing governors greater visibility of college life.
02.24	<p>CHAIR'S WELCOME</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, in particular Sarah Mason who was attending her first meeting as a new governor and Tomas Pukalski who was observing as incoming governor (term starting 30/4/24).</p> <p>The Chair noted thanks to Eddie Weiss for his time, commitment and support of the college as it would be his last Corporation meeting and a gift of thanks would be passed on to him.</p> <p>As it was Bethan Waters last Corporation meeting the Chair thanked her for her time, commitment and support of the college and this was echoed by Board and Executive Team members present.</p> <p>Apologies were noted and there were no new declarations of interest relating to the business of the meeting.</p> <p>Running of agenda items was adjusted to allow for the Student Governor to leave early for work commitments that evening.</p>
03.24	<p>STUDENT GOVERNORS' REPORT</p> <p>The student governor took members through the report noting very positive feedback had been received from peers following the Student Conference and Velocity events.</p> <p>Velocity had been hugely successful with approximately 700 students attending Velocity. Students were a credit to themselves and the college, going beyond ambitions in their interactions with employers and their high ambitions and expectations were well received by both staff and students involved.</p> <p>Equally, the Student Conference had been a great success and the Chair and fellow governors who had attended noted how positive the event had been as well as quite humbling hearing how life changing college can be for students. The Chair noted that feedback on next steps and lessons learned would be welcomed at the next meeting (Action: APSES).</p> <p>The student governor informed the Board that following interviews on 21/3/24, five college students are now High Sheriff Champions and will work with the High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire on showcasing</p>

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	<p>skills, raising awareness of issues faced by young people in the area and attending various events with local stakeholders to develop skills and experience to support future education or employment.</p> <p>The meeting was advised that the new Director for Student Services, Matt Mansfield, had been recently recruited and the SET team were looking forward to working with him.</p> <p>The student governor added how successful the recent Bucks Skills Show had been and added that he himself had been responsible for the Public Services stand with his peers and that their involvement had helped with a really positive outcome.</p> <p><i>Ben Banks left the meeting at 6.15pm.</i></p>
04.24	<p>DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE REPORT</p> <p>Discussion took place regarding governors’ training and development with a consensus in favour of a combination of half day strategic events that will allow for face-to-face networking time and new policy briefings etc., together with shorter (30min) sessions at the end of each Corporation meeting for more focussed development topics. The DG would be circulating a survey seeking preferences on meeting times, strategic events and topics governors would be interested in more knowledge of (Action: DG).</p> <p>Referring to discussions at the January strategy day, the notion of parent governors was again discussed, and it was agreed this would be considered by the Search and Governance Committee (Action: Search & Governance Committee).</p> <p>The Corporation Resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratify the approval of the appointment of Charlie Young as an Independent Governor with effect from 15/1/24 for an initial four-year term of office. • Ratify the approval of the appointment of Sarah Mason as (i)an Independent Governor with effect from 12/2/24 for an initial four-year term of office, (ii) a Member of the Audit and Risk Committee with effect from 12/2/24 and (iii) Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee with effect from 24/5/24. • Ratify the approval of the appointment of Tomas Pukalski as an Independent Governor with effect from 30/4/24 for an initial four-year term of office. • Ratify the approval of the appointment of Nick Bevan as a Co-opted Member of the Audit and Risk Committee with effect from 12/2/24 for an initial one-year term of office. • Ratify the approval of the appointment of Tim Marshall as a Member of the Audit and Risk Committee with effect from 12/2/24. • Approve the appointment of Charlie Young as a Member of the Curriculum, Quality and Students Committee with effect from 27/3/24. • Approve the appointment of Tomas Pukalski as a Member of the Estates Committee with effect from 30/4/24. • Approve the appointment of Ian Harper as Chair of the Search and Governance Committee with effect from 27/3/24. • Approve the appointment of Amir Khaki as Vice Chair of the Search and Governance Committee with effect from 27/3/24. • Approve the appointment of Ian Greggor as Chair of the Remuneration Committee with effect from 1/8/24. • Adopt the new AoC Code of Good Governance with effect from 1/8/24. • Note the progress update of the External Board Review action plan. • Note the Governor Links and Engagement 2023-24. Governors were asked to notify the DG of any preferences they have of areas they would like to be linked with for 2024-25 when the scheme would be reviewed and include students in link meetings to increase student voice as governance level. The Student Governor had commented prior to the meeting that this would be most welcomed by students.

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05.24	<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 13/12/23. • Note the updated rolling actions log noting all actions had been completed or were planned. Support is always welcome from governors and their networks in terms of placements for student work experience. • Note the report and draft minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 6/12/23. • Note the report and draft minutes of the Finance & Resources Committee meeting held on 26/2/24. • Note the report and draft minutes of the Curriculum, Quality & Students Committee meeting held on 27/2/24.
06.24	<p>KPI Targets 2023-24 Monitoring</p> <p>The Chair reminded governors to use the KPI report as a signpost to reports with fuller narrative and discussion of key matters under those agenda items.</p> <p>On scrutinising the latest progress, governors raised the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention remains amber as although currently in a positive position and on track, the meeting was reassured that the executive team is not complacent with a final term remaining before being rated green. • Student work experience placements data does not include experience gained by students at the Velocity event and other experience since then. Work experience placements remain challenging, but it is anticipated this will be much closer to target. • It was agreed the KPI sheet would include a progress/trends column of changes since last reviewed (Action: Executive Team). • Governor praise was noted for the positive position of ‘Our People’ metrics. • Further praise was noted for the report and layout being more readable for governors and allowing a more holistic view of what is happening in college than in previous years. <p>The Corporation Resolved to Note the report.</p>
07.24	<p>PRINCIPAL’S REPORT</p> <p><u>National Context</u></p> <p>The Principal’s report gave governors an update on the national context, including a note on Ofsted as the college will be subject to full inspection before September 2025.</p> <p>On the Buckinghamshire Devolution Deal, the staff governor (and Bucks Council member) confirmed devolution of the AEB will be the Leader’s decision. The Principal noted the deal will provide both opportunities and challenges and governors felt it would be useful to invite a representative from Bucks Council to talk to the Board at an appropriate opportunity (Action: Principal/DG to schedule). The Principal and Martina Porter are both on the Buckinghamshire Skills Strategy Board ensuring direct feeds from the college.</p> <p>Query was raised as to whether losing the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) risks losing relationships with professional partners. The Council has not yet confirmed responsibilities but both Martina Porter and the Principal have been very proactive for Buckinghamshire and strong connections with former LEP Board members remain. The Board welcomed and supported the work in this regard given it’s benefit for the college and its students.</p> <p><u>Accountability Agreement</u></p> <p>As the deadline for submission of the 2024/25 accountability agreement falls before the July Corporation meeting, the Corporation Resolved to Approve delegation of its scrutiny to the Curriculum, Quality and Students Committee for recommendation to the Corporation for approval via email resolution ahead of the 30/6/24 submission deadline (Action: VPCP/CQS Committee).</p>

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	<p><u>Leadership Development Academy</u> This initiative was highly welcomed by governors as an exciting opportunity for staff. The Principal confirmed that every people manager has attended and been involved in the academy which continues to develop. There is an Aspiring Managers Day planned to provide a safe opportunity for staff to see what the next step in their career looks like without commitment. Positive feedback has been received from staff with some highlights shared on video at the start of the meeting.</p> <p><u>Health and Safety Report</u> The Chair raised a query with regard to the number of fire wardens and first aiders. Assurance was provided by the executive as to the new approach which had been introduced asking managers to nominate team members and support them in terms of expectations on time to receive training and fulfil the roles. The COO added that previously such roles had only been filled by business support areas and the move to including teachers, teaching assistants etc was welcomed as additional support for staff in those areas to deal with occurrences more efficiently.</p> <p>Further query was raised on the variances of the numbers of accidents (in particular zero in March) and the COO confirmed this is a true picture with genuinely no cases when reported as a zero. A new Health and Safety Manager is joining the department within the next week which was welcomed and the COO provided assurance that safety within the college remains good.</p> <p>It was agreed vaping is a concern, both within the college and nationally across schools and colleges. The Ready, Respectful Safe policy is in place and conversations are taking place within tutorials to address the issue. Plans are in place to make messages more scientific to increase students' awareness of vaping implications and consequences to health and efforts continue to encourage students to move to smoking/vaping areas outside.</p> <p>The Corporation Resolved to Note the report.</p>
08.24	<p>CURRICULUM, QUALITY AND STUDENTS REPORT</p> <p>Detail and data had been scrutinised by the Curriculum, Quality and Students Committee and the Board received a summary report with updates since the committee meeting on 27/2/24. While being taken through the report by the VCPQ and APSES, governors raised the following under discussion.</p> <p><u>Curriculum</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications are in-line with last year with a positive increase on attendees at open events recently held. The college's schools liaison has improved with a very positive impact and strong relationships have been built to support progression to college. • It is hoped Velocity will be a staple annual programme for students after such huge success with students and employers at the recent initial event. • The SEND review in November 2023 had been welcomed and positive impact has been seen in the clearer set provision, and in preparing students for adulthood. A more inclusive curriculum is being planned for 2024/25 in collaboration with the local authority and SEND parents. • Industry placements remains a challenge and governors sympathised with the barriers for under 18s. The VPCQ provided reassurance that the college would continue to expose students to employers to ensure relevant experiences are gained and work continues to strengthen links with employers to support them to take on students. Amir Khaki (NHS governor) offered that Bucks Healthcare Trust has a target to take on SEND students for placements under 'Project Choice' and safeguarding controls are in place to support students into the workplace. This was welcomed and would be followed up accordingly (Action: VPCQ/APSES). • Bucks Business First (BBF) has a strong community of employers who could raise awareness for work placements and act as a channel for the college. <p><u>Quality</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VPCQ provided assurance than the team is working on apprenticeships retention to meet the achievement rate. • Attendance remains a challenge both locally and nationally and while it is not possible at this stage in the year to achieve the target, work continues to improve with innovative approaches to stabilise

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	<p>study programme attendance. It was noted that the experience gained this year would help with actions to support attendance in subsequent years. The college is looking at feeder schools attendance to see if there is any correlation when it comes college attendance but some remain reluctant to share data. Schools have noticed a significant dip in attendance since the Covid pandemic and governors shared their support for such a challenging area.</p> <p><u>Students</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board had received the college’s Prevent Risk Assessment in the report, fulfilling the Prevent Duty requirement for such documentation. This ensures local issues are known and recorded so that the college can tackle them, minimising risks of radicalisation and extremism. Risks are monitored at every level. The Chair queried and the APSES confirmed that the college had actively sought representation on the Prevent Strategic Board for Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Berkshire. It was noted that active involvement with that Board was helping the college. • In terms of the college’s largest subcontractor, the team remains committed to ensure they are meeting all college requirements in terms of safeguarding and prevent. <p>The Corporation Resolved to Note the report.</p>
09.24	<p>FINANCE AND RESOURCES REPORT</p> <p>Members were briefed on the current financial position noting little change since November but that the March accounts will show a bigger update with investments for this year and next year. Earlier discussion in the meeting showed that additional investment is needed to support efforts to improve attendance, work readiness skills and over initiatives that now form a far greater part of the study programme than they have historically – the challenge is that this is not explicitly funded by the DfE and the college must find ways to do this.</p> <p>The 2024/25 pay review is expected to be more graduated across the pay scales to ensure fairer pay increases at the lower end of the pay scale reflecting the change in National Living Wage.</p> <p>Governors welcomed the cashflow forecast noting that it showed the scale of investments over the next few years. Governors requested, and the COO confirmed, that detail on investments would be shared with the Finance and Resources Committee and subsequent Corporation at the appropriate time for scrutiny and decision-making.</p> <p>Query was raised over commercial income and whether the college is maximising income from use of its assets and resources. The COO confirmed Aylesbury campus has more commercial facilities than other campuses, but workplace trends have changed since the pandemic with less requirement for meeting spaces, catering etc. The focus is on student recruitment and supporting the awareness of the college and that the benefits from subsequent increase in student numbers nearly always outweighs any commercial income.</p> <p>Governors noted that publicising of the new build should drive future student recruitment and it was confirmed much work is planned for this as part of the college’s strategic planning. The VPCQ noted that following the Velocity event at Bucks New University, a number of students had confirmed their placements at the university after visiting the campus. This evidences the link between these events and the FE/HE skills escalator. It was also confirmed the college will continue with its PR activity and is looking at partnering with more and more Wycombe-based business to promote the move forward.</p> <p>The support of Aztech IT continues to be productive and a 3-year extension has been arranged with full support of the Finance and Resources Committee on investment in the service.</p> <p>The Corporation Resolved to Note the report.</p>
10.24	<p>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HUMAN RESOURCES WORKFORCE REPORT</p> <p>The Principal welcomed questions on the report in the absence of the EDHR.</p>

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	<p>A recent analysis on agency expenditure had shown that with the exception of Construction and apprentice assessors, agency spend is much reduced. Staff retention has increased, particularly in teaching and the college is looking at alternative solutions to support the more challenging areas.</p> <p>Query was raised in terms of vacancies, largely being in the lower paid roles, and this was confirmed as an accurate judgment with the graduated pay award hoping to improve recruitment to such roles.</p> <p>The Corporation Resolved to Note the report.</p>
11.24	DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 3 rd July 2024
12.24	<i>Alex Reynolds and Adam Poland left the meeting at 8pm and the Corporation moved to the confidential agenda.</i>

Approved as an accurate record of discussion: 3rd July 2024

Signed by Chair of Corporation:

