

# Waltham Forest College



## THE CORPORATION OF WALTHAM FOREST COLLEGE

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 JULY 2024

#### MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATION

Youness Abidou	apologies	Member, Vice Chair of the Corporation, Chair of F & R
Antoinette Beekye	present	Staff Member
Paul Butler	present	Member, Chair of the Corporation, Safeguarding Champion
Omur Derelikoylu	present	Staff Member
Michael Eichhorn	present	Member, Chair of A & R
Janet Gardner	present	Member, Principal & Chief Executive Member
Andrew Hall	present	Member, sustainability champion (via Teams)
Susannah Hume	present	Member, SEND Champion
Remi Iyun	present	Member, EDI Champion
Bryan Johnston	apologies	Member
Alison Morris	present	Member, Corporation Vice Chair, Chair of C & Q, Skills Champion
Renatta Nzomono	apologies	Member
Amir Seyyad	present	Member, Health & Safety Champion
Leon Smith	present	Member
Gbeminiyi Soyinka	present	Member
Kwasi Owusu-Mensah	present	Student Member

#### CLERK TO THE CORPORATION

Naomi Shoffman Director of Governance (DoGov)

#### IN ATTENDANCE

Hassan Rizvi	Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality (DPCQ)
Abena Rodman -Tay	Deputy Principal Finance & Resources (DPFR)
Rob Winter	Head of Welfare and Well being (HoW&W)
Nadeem Khalifa	Director of BIDU (DoBIDU)
Michael Burgoyne	Director of HE (DoHE)

#### **31.24 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from the following members:

Ms Nzomono who is on a leave of absence and Mr Johnston for illness.

#### **32.24 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Mr Butler, Mr Smith and Ms Lyun declared an interest in a part two agenda item on membership.

### **33.24 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CORPORATION HELD ON 8 MAY 2024**

- I. The Minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 8 May 2024, were agreed by the Corporation to be signed by the Chair as a true record. Subject to typos
- II. The Corporation ratified the following:
  - Chairs Actions 3 June 2024- the appointment of Saxis Group Ltd to provide ICT Networking and Storage Solutions as per the Financial Regulations as the value of this contract is above £150k.
  - Approved by the Corporation on 29 June 2024 – Annual Accountability Statement 2024-25.

### **34.24 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES WHICH ARE NOT THE SUBJECT OF SEPARATE REPORTS**

NONE

### **35.24 STUDENT GOVERNOR REPORT**

The Student Governor, presented his report and highlighted the following:

- The Activities and Engagements offered for learners in Term 3
- World Culture Day Highlights
- Meeting with Sir Iain Duncan Smith (MP)
- Panel Session participation at the Skills Group Induction Basecamp at DfE

The Principal praised Kwasi as an outstanding college ambassador who was chosen to speak to around 40 civil service members at the DfE about his learning experiences and the impact of qualification reforms. He was noted for his positive demeanour, articulate presentation, and adept handling of questions.

Board members asked Kwasi about his student governor's experience and discussed upcoming events for the next academic year, seeking ways to better support student governors.

The Chair expressed gratitude and congratulations to the student governor for his report.

**THE CORPORATION NOTED THE STUDENT GOVERNOR REPORT.**

### **36.24 SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT**

The Deputy DoLS spoke to the report and highlighted the following points:

- Overall safeguarding referrals has increased by 40% and the number of associated learners supported by the safeguarding team has increased by 41%, in comparison to the same period the previous year.
- The breakdown of all the safeguarding concerns and key categories and headlines and key issues being here has been a slight increase in certain monitoring categories as students' welfare and wellbeing needs are reviewed on a weekly basis.
- There has been an increase in the number of vulnerable learners and more of these learners needing support for safeguarding.

A detailed discussion took place regarding the increase in mental health concerns for students in the college and nationally.

The Chair requested the inclusion of case studies in the next report to better understand how the College can provide assistance.

**THE CORPORATION NOTED THE REPORT.**

### **37.24 SUBCONTRACTING**

The DoBIDU presented the report and highlighted the following points:

- All providers are currently on track with its performance, and no providers are failing to meet their contracts. Some have already met the values set at the beginning of the year.
- Proposed contract values for the next academic year
- No changes in the providers proposed for the next year at this stage but will review again at final year end .
- Contracts will be issued only after passing the due diligence process and approval.
- A thorough due diligence process will be conducted, meeting ESFA and GLA requirements. This process includes reviewing policies, procedures, and financial checks to ensure robustness.
- The proportion of subcontracted activity between providers may vary according to stakeholder demand but is unlikely to increase in its overall value for the year.
- Note the mechanisms used by the College to monitor and support the quality and compliance of all subcontracted activities.

### **THE CORPORATION AGREED TO THE RENEWAL OF ALL SUBCONTRACTING FOR 2024-25.**

### **38.24 PRINCIPAL'S COLLEGE REPORT**

The Principal said she would take the report as read and then highlighted the following key points:

- The College has shown strong performance in 2023/24, with retention and predicted achievements aligning with past high outcomes and remaining well above national rates, consistent with the March Outstanding Ofsted inspection.
- Financial performance is strong, with a projected year-end surplus due to increased in-year funding from successful growth bids and prudent cost management. T level recruitment was lower than planned but mitigated by additional funding for 16-18-year-old learners. The financial health rating is expected to stay outstanding.
- Student applications for 2024/25 are significantly higher than last year, indicating continued growth. However, increased costs for 2024/25 exceed the funding allocation, putting pressure on the budget despite a slight increase from a successful business case to the ESFA.
- The DfE is considering a three-year funding allocation, which would ease budgeting and planning.
- The proposed staff pay award is pending union votes, with staff generally trusting the senior leadership team to make prudent financial decisions.
- Ongoing capital works will challenge space availability, requiring agile timetabling. Efforts to find suitable new buildings have been proactive but unsuccessful so far.
- Countryside issues have taken up significant management time, but an agreement for them to cover legal expenses has been secured.
- The College's reputation is growing, bolstered by the Outstanding Ofsted grade, and it continues to influence sector leadership. Strategic relationships with the council are developing, with senior leaders planning to meet next term.
- The College has been recognized for its performance and asked to support other colleges. Local MPs have been re-elected, maintaining strong support for the College.
- A case study on the College and Newham College is featured in the LSIP report.
- Further to the Governors' Strategy Day, there is a consensus on the College's ambitious future direction, with a new strategic plan to be approved next term, supported by an external Economic Impact Report.
- An LSIF bid to develop retrofit sustainable houses requires Corporation approval and will be expedited outside the regular meetings cycle.

Members discussed the following points:

- There is a misconception that the new government will provide more funding, which is not the case.
- If the land bid is rejected, further Corporation agreement may be needed. The ceiling for the bid will be determined if an increase is requested.
- The College's marketing campaign following the Ofsted inspection has been very effective.
- The College can continue to run BTECs if they are not defunded.
- The mood regarding funding in higher education is low, but the College's diversification strategy provides a wide reach.
- There is potential to join an IOT in partnership with another college.
- Engagement with stakeholders and influence within the AoC was discussed.
- The College is exploring AI for business support functions, with a focus on the right expertise and potential pilot programs. AI teaching resources already in use have been well received, and software to detect AI misuse by students was discussed.

**THE CORPORATION AGREED TO:**

- **MONITOR THE CONTINUED STRONG PERFORMANCE AGAINST KPIS FOR 2023/24**
- **NOTE THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH JOINT UNIONS REGARDING THE PAY AWARD**
- **NOTE THE CONTINUED POSITIVE PROGRESS IN FURTHER INFLUENCE AND REPUTATION OF THE COLLEGE AND WIDER SECTOR**
- **CHAIRS ACTION FOR LSIF CONTRACT**

**39.24 CURRICULUM AND QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING ON 18 JUNE 2024**

The Chair of the Committee presented the draft minutes of the Curriculum and Quality Committee Meeting on 18 June 2024 and reported on the items and discussions covered at the meeting.

**THE CORPORATION NOTED THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CURRICULUM AND QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING.**

**40.24 HE COLLEGE POLICY AND ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION STATEMENT**

The Director of HE presented the HE College Policy and the Access and Participation Statement, both of which had been recommended for approval by the C&Q Committee. He explained the governance oversight subcommittee process and advised that a repository on the website will be created for dedicated HE policies.

Members noted that with the OFS Chair's resignation and ongoing changes, the governance regime's future is uncertain and needs close monitoring.

The Chair acknowledged the significant amount of work involved and thanked the Director of HE and the team for their efforts.

**THE CORPORATION AGREED TO APPROVE THE HE POLICY AND STATEMENT.**

**41.24 UPDATE ON CURRICULUM AND QUALITY/QIP**

The DPC&Q presented the Curriculum and Quality Report, highlighting the following points:

- The percentage of teachers meeting the College's KPI standards.
- The current retention rate, consistent with the same period in 2022-23.
- Predicted overall achievement rates for all ages in 2023-24.
- Overall attendance, particularly in English and maths, which remains challenging and is being supplemented with out-of-class support.
- The QDP return rate and overall satisfaction, rated as 'very good' by QDP.

- Most QIP actions are expected to be rated green by the end of the year.

The Committee Chair praised the DPC&Q and his team for their strong C&Q performance. The Principal also credited the DPC&Q and his team for driving improvements in C&Q.

In response to a question about improvements in teaching, learning, and assessment, the DPC&Q detailed the various support mechanisms implemented across the College.

**THE CORPORATION NOTED THE PROGRESS ON THE KEY ASPECTS OF CURRICULUM AND QUALITY.**

**42.24 PROGRESS ON ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT 2023-24**

**THE CORPORATION RECEIVED AND NOTED THE REPORT FOR INFORMATION.**

**43.24 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING ON 25 JUNE 2024**

The Incoming Vice Chair of the Committee presented the draft minutes of the Meeting on 25 June 2024 and reported on the items and discussions covered at the meeting.

**THE CORPORATION NOTED THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING.**

**44.24 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE BUDGET 2024-5**

The DPF&R presented the Income and Expenditure Budget 2024-5 highlighting the following points:

- The budget had been scrutinised extensively by the Finance and Resources Committee and recommended for approval.
- This budget has been updated since the one that was presented to the Finance and Resources Committee with the revision of two tables to reflect changes due to a funding error, for which the College made a successful business case. The ESFA have confirmed the additional funding, which means the College can afford to increase the pay award by an additional 1% on top of that already planned .
- WFC will be reporting back to the ESFA with a three-year budget.
- The replacement of some FH ratios would change the FH rating from Outstanding to Good when the new financial indicators come into effect for the new financial health score.

Members had a discussion around acceptable ratings, emphasising that we must not fall below Good.

**THE CORPORATION AGREED TO APPROVE THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE BUDGET 2024-5 AND PAY AWARD**

**45.24 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2023-24 – MONTHLY MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS FOR 31 MAY 2024**

The Corporation reviewed the Management Accounts up to 31 May 2024, noting key points and progress against the financial plan, and potential issues impacting the College accounts.

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee suggested:

- Reconsidering the investment strategy due to potential interest rate decreases.
- Reviewing the reserves policy of maintaining three months' reserves, with an aspiration to extend this if affordable.

It was agreed that these policies will be revisited by the Finance and Resources Committee.

**THE CORPORATION NOTED THE:**

- **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO 31 MAY 2024 RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL POSITION OF WALTHAM FOREST COLLEGE.**
- **KEY FINANCIAL RISKS BEING MANAGED AND THE MITIGATING ACTIONS BEING TAKEN BY THE COLLEGE.**

**46.24** **CAPITAL UPDATE**

The DPFR presented the report and highlighted the following points:

- West Wing Capital Works: The Phase 2 Delay: was originally scheduled to complete 21<sup>st</sup> June but has been extended to July 10 due to electrical integration issues discovered in old electrical boards.
- Phase 3 is critical and scheduled for the summer, some overlapping with enrolment.
- The process has been challenging, requiring close oversight and robust meetings to hold contractors accountable.
- Unexpected issues arising from the age and condition of parts of the building that were not identified in previous surveys.
- Costs for some areas have exceeded estimates, leading to the exclusion of certain planned works to stay within budget. A contingency fund is maintained to cover unforeseen expenses.
- There is a tight timeline due to grant funding, necessitating communication with the DfE to manage any changes.
- Risk registers have been added for both the West Wing and the Post 16 projects.

**THE CORPORATION NOTED THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE FECTF PROGRAMME, T LEVEL CAPITAL PROJECT AND POST 16 CAPACITY PROJECTS.**

**47.24** **REVIEW OF POLICIES**

The DPFR presented the changes to the following policies which had been recommended for approval by the F & R Committee:

- I. Revised Financial Regulations
- II. Treasury Management Policy
- III. Reserves Policy
- IV. College Fees Policy
- V. HE Fees Policy
- VI. Health and Safety Policy

**THE CORPORATION AGREED TO APPROVE THE POLICIES.**

**48.24** **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING ON 11 JUNE 2024**

The Chair of the Committee presented the draft minutes of the Committee meeting on 11 June 2024 and reported on the items and discussions covered at the meeting.

**THE CORPORATION NOTED THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING.**

**49.24** **DRAFT INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2024/25**

The DPFR presented the report and advised that the plan has been fully scrutinised by the Audit and Risk Committee who had recommended it for approval.

**THE CORPORATION APPROVED THE INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2024-25.**

**50.24 NOTE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE COLLEGE FOR 2023/24**

**THE CORPORATION RECEIVED AND NOTED THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE COLLEGE FOR 2023/24.**

**51.24 ONS UPDATE FOR INFORMATION**

The DPFR presented the reports and highlight the schedule of 'Musts' as detailed in the College financial handbook to ensure compliance.

Members discussed the proposal to introduce the public sector financial year end along side the academic financial year end.

Members asked for and it was agreed that the senior team will do a check list against all the 'musts' to ensure we are compliant.

**THE CORPORATION RECEIVED AND NOTED THE REPORT FOR INFORMATION.**

**52.24 RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK - RISK APPETITE STATEMENT UPDATE**

The DPFR presented the Risk Appetite Strategy Update and highlighted the following points:

- The College's key strategic objective is to deliver outstanding technical and professional learning, which raises aspirations, develops skills and creates futures.
- This document reviews the agreed Risk Appetite Statement for the College and proposes minor updates given changes and developments over the past 12 months.
- The Risk Appetite Statement for the College sets out the framework for assessing and monitoring risks to the College in relation to its overarching strategic objective to inform decision making and highlights the owned control environment for the College Executive and Corporation.
- The RAS is broken down into individual risk types. For each risk type, the relevant subject matter experts were consulted. The RAS should be reviewed on an annual basis (or as required by a business need as result of in year risk events) as the appetite may change depending on the performance and internal and external environment.
- The report also proposes amendments to the cover paper for reports to Corporation and Committees to demonstrate how the risk appetite is considered as part of each decision making.

**THE CORPORATION AGREED TO APPROVE THE AMENDED REVIEWED RISK APPETITE STATEMENT.**

**53.24 COLLEGE RISK REGISTER UPDATE**

The DPFR presented the Risk Register showing pre and post mitigation scorings, and controls in place to mitigate risks. The DPFR advised the Committee of the Top 5 risks on the register, key risk movements and updated activities.

**THE CORPORATION NOTED PROGRESS MADE IN ALL RISK AREAS.**

**54.24 THERE WAS NO OTHER ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

**55.24 THANK YOU TO STUDENT GOVERNOR**

The Chair asked that his and the Board's thanks be conveyed to the student governor for all his work and support throughout the year.

**56.24 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

October 2024

**Staff and student Governors and members of staff withdrew ahead of Part two of the meeting which was recorded as confidential Minutes 57.24 – 61.24**

*The meeting closed at 9.25 pm.*

<b>These minutes have been approved by the Corporation as a correct record.</b>	
<b>CHAIR:</b>  Paul Butler	<b>DATE:</b>  15 October 2024
	<b>REMOTE CONFIRMATION:</b>  <b>OR SIGNED:</b>