

# Waltham Forest College



## THE CORPORATION OF WALTHAM FOREST COLLEGE

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2024

#### MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATION

Youness Abidou	apologies	Member, Vice Chair of the Corporation, Chair of F & R
Antoinette Beekye	present	Staff Member
John Bell	present	Member
Paul Butler	present	Member, Chair of the Corporation, Safeguarding Champion
Michael Eichhorn	apologies	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
Thamilarasi Jasitharan	present	Staff Member
Remi Iyun	present	Member, EDI Champion
Bryan Johnston	present	Member
Alison Morris	apologies	Member, Corporation Vice Chair, Chair of C & Q, Skills Champion
Renatta Nzomono	present	Member
Amir Seyyad	apologies	Member, Health & Safety Champion
Leon Smith	present	Member
Gbeminiyi Soyinka	present	Member
Ridoan Hoque	present	Student 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)
Melanie Price	Director of HR (DoHR)
Nadeem Khalifa	Director of BIDU (DoBIDU)

#### **62.24 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.
- The Board ratified the new Staff Governor's appointment.
- The Chair welcomed Ms Jasitharan and Mr Hoque to their first meeting.
- Apologies for absence were received from the following members:  
Mr Abidou due to work commitments and Mr Eichhorn who is on a one month leave of absence.

#### **63.24 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None.

#### **64.24 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CORPORATION HELD ON 9 JULY 2024**

- i. The Minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 9 July 2024, were agreed by the Corporation to be signed by the Chair as a true record.
- ii. The Corporation ratified the following Chairs Actions since the last meeting.
  - LSIF Green Skills Centre appointment of contractor (attached)
  - Investment Management & Treasury Deposit (attached)
  - Safeguarding and Prevent Policy 2024-25(see item 7i)
  - Re-appointment of Mr Eichhorn as Governor and Chair of Audit and Risk Committee (see item 13)

The DoGov confirmed that all actions have either been completed or have not yet reached target date.

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

NONE

#### **66.24 HUMAN RESOURCES ANNUAL REPORT**

The DoHR presented the report and highlighted the following points:

- The report highlights the key metrics across a three year period 2021-2024 underscoring both improvements and areas for continued focus.
- The Increase in headcount has had an impact on some of the metrics.
- The College has achieved progress in reducing employee absence rates, improving recruitment, and ensuring compliance, with a steady expansion of its workforce. However, ongoing focus on employee turnover and the gender pay gap is crucial for continued improvement. Analysis of exit data has identified salaries and career progression as key factors influencing staff departures. Due to the college's small size, even minor changes at the managerial level can significantly impact the gender pay gap.
- WFC has an aging workforce which has contributed to the increased turnover. Other reasons are due to people not being the best fit as it is important to keep the right culture. As a result, we continue our work on building our talent pool and developing our succession plans.
- The staff survey outcomes response rate participation has slightly dropped but satisfaction rates have gone up. Onboarding of staff has improved.
- The pay gap report incorporating Gender, Ethnicity and Disability will be presented to the next meeting.
- Long term sickness absence reduced significantly.
- The College participated in the Wellbeing Index by the charity Mind and earned Bronze accreditation, reflecting its commitment to employee well-being and progress in this area.

The Board raised and discussed the following points:

A member praised the reduced sickness rate, which the DoHR said she attributes to increased support and timely interventions, highlighting that the recent trend is linked more to seasonal illness rather than mental health issues.

There was a discussion around the strategies being used to mitigate the risk of employee poaching, emphasising the need for effective approaches, particularly in challenging conditions.

The evaluation of the effectiveness of mentoring programmes was discussed. Various evaluation methods were proposed, with managers finding the programs beneficial. There was mention of differing types of mentoring and that success was being measured through specific themes. The DoHR emphasised the need to maintain a balance between personal and professional development as the College must ensure people are receiving the mentoring support needed to empower them to do their role.

The Chair reported that the good work standard employer accreditation achieved by the College has been recognised by the AoC as a good measure to have. The AoC is considering proposing that other colleges aim to achieve this.

## **THE CORPORATION NOTED THE HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT**

The DoHR withdrew from the meeting.

### **67.24 PRINCIPAL'S COLLEGE REPORT**

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

- A lot of change happening in the sector
- Uncertainties around qualification reforms will make business planning difficult as students are looking now at courses for next year.
- The impact on the College of changes to employment laws and employee rights
- The impact of a potential increase in employer NI contributions
- The AoC recommendation on pay is lower than that agreed for WFC. The College is working towards being able to offer more competitive pay.
- The external work carried out since the last report – noting that a good relationship has been established with the Deputy Mayor for London for Business and Growth.
- The draft Economic impact report (EIR) commissioned by WFC has been included for information – The Principal conveyed her thanks to the two governors who provided input and helped in the shaping of the report. In terms of launching it the Principal has reached out to various agencies to progress this and is awaiting a response, she added that she would welcome feedback on this document before it is finalized in next couple of weeks. The EIR will underpin the College's new strategic plan- a discussion followed around how impact is measured, and the comparators used.
- The College is celebrating recent achievements which include being shortlisted for Association of Colleges (AoC) awards which include Young Student of the Year Award and Student Green Commitment Award. Winners will be announced at the AoC conference in November. The College has also been shortlisted for the Mayor of London Adult Education Awards including Mayor of London Distinguished Provider of Adult Education Award and Inspirational Adult Learner of the Year Award. Winners will be announced at the Mayor London's Adult Education Awards Ceremony also in November.
- The Principal participated in a leadership programme for CEO's in the public sector.
- Outturn of finance and quality both positive for 2023-24 and closely aligned to forecast and predictions been presented throughout the year.
- The Proposed Targets and KPI's for this year and rationales for each of them

The Board raised and discussed the following points:

- Reputational risk around learners not currently being reported on
- Rationale for some of the KPI's and targets set around achievement, sustainability, internal progression.
- Curriculum planning and recruitment for A Level for 2025/26.

## **THE CORPORATION AGREED TO:**

- **NOTE THE STRONG YEAR END OVERALL QUALITY AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF THE COLLEGE AGAINST KPIS FOR 2023/24**
- **APPROVE THE KPIS FOR 2024/25**
- **MONITOR THE PROGRESS OF CAPITAL PROJECTS**
- **NOTE THE CONTINUED POSITIVE PROGRESS TO FURTHER INFLUENCE THE REPUTATION OF THE COLLEGE AND WIDER SECTOR**
- **CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE IMPACT OF FORTHCOMING EDUCATIONAL AND QUALIFICATIONS REVIEW, AND EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATIVE CHANGES WHICH COULD IMPACT THE EDUCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COLLEGE AND CONDITIONS FOR STAFF**

#### **68.24 UPDATE ON CURRICULUM AND QUALITY/QIP**

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

- The College's performance and progress on curriculum and quality for 2023/24 and update on the start of year 2024/25.
- The curriculum delivery in 2023/24 progressed as planned and subject to final outturn, the overall outcomes look very positive.
- The key aspects of curriculum and quality including achievement to date and projected achievements on Education and Training (E&T) courses, apprenticeships and attendance for 2023-24.
- The outcomes of quality assurance, improvement processes and ongoing actions.
- Enrolments are looking good but will be reviewed after census date.
- The College's Self-Assessment Report for the year 2023/24 with the Quality Improvement plan for 2024/25 will be presented to the Board at the December 2024 Board meeting.
- A list of destinations and achievements will come to the next meeting.

The Board raised and discussed the following points:

- The outcome of first year delivery of T Levels
- Analysis of and availability of data of changes in local markets .
- Interventions being used to reduce attrition.
- Capacity if WFC recruits to target and growth areas

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

#### **69.24 SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT**

The Principal presented the safeguarding policy which had been revised in line with KCSIE updated guidance published in August 2024. The revised policy was approved via Chair's action so as to be in operation for this academic year. The mental health policy was also presented for information.

**THE CORPORATION NOTED THE REPORT.**

#### **70.24 DRAFT MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS FOR 31 JULY 2024**

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

The Board raised and discussed the following points:

- The small debt which was a loan. And pros and cons of paying it off early and point at which it would be worth considering . The DPFR confirmed that there is still no opportunity for colleges to access loans for capital funding.
- The amount of cash reserves and whether we are being overly cautious.
- How Capital over and under spends are treated.

#### **THE CORPORATION NOTED THE:**

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

#### **71.24 CAPITAL UPDATE**

The DPFR presented the report and highlighted the following points:

- **West Wing Capital Works:**
  - Overall, the project remains on target for completion by October 2024.
  - Due to the planning permission request to replace six windows at the front and the creation of a new DDA entrance on the ground floor, the DFE has extended the project end to March 2025 to accommodate these additional changes.
  - There remains a lot of snagging to be rectified.
- **T level digital capital project:** The digital workspace was completed and handed over to the College on 24 April 2024.
- **Post 16 Capacity Funding:**
  - The College has seen consistent growth in post-16 learners, causing capacity issues. To address this, the proposal to convert an unused swimming pool area and storage space into a flexible teaching space and computer suite, was approved by the DFE. Construction began in May 2024.
  - During construction, unexpected asbestos was found in the ceiling, impacting both time and cost. Consequently, the refurbishment of a computer room was excluded from the project, and the risk register was updated. The original practical completion date is November 21, 2024, but the contractor has requested an extension until February 21, 2025, due to the asbestos discovery. They aim to complete by January 31, 2025, pending approval.
  - The DFE has been informed, and a programme extension is pending approval. The project faces increased risk because the extended completion date aligns closely with the end of grant funding on March 31, 2025. The College may need to cover any unspent funds beyond this date, although efforts are being made to finish by January 31, 2025, to mitigate this risk.

The Chair asked whether the team is happy with the contractors work so far. The DPFR confirmed they are but added that should any more issues arise such as Asbestos that could present time challenges. The DPFR clarified that an asbestos survey had been carried out, but it was subsequently found in an area where it would not usually be expected or tested.

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

#### **72.24 RISK MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT**

The DPFR presented the Risk Management Annual Report, and which includes the following:

- The level of risk appetite agreed by the Board and identified key risks, levels of assurance and actions as appropriate to stay within the agreed tolerance of risk.
- The College's risk and control systems, roles and responsibilities.
- Detailing of risk register information and management processes.
- Risk Management and Internal Controls systems are set out in the 'Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control' which is included within the annual audited financial statements.

- The five top rated risks in 2023-24.
- The analysis shows an increase in the risk profile of the College between July 2023 and July 2024 with an increase in the number of risks pre-mitigation and a change in high category risks post-mitigation.

The DPFR further advised that:

- The risk register is scrutinised at by all Committees for their relevant risks.
- The RAS will come back to next meeting.

A member suggested the DPFR reviews the residual risks to see if there is any movement as she would have expected to see more greens come through due to the work being done around the risks. This was agreed as an action to take forward.

### **THE CORPORATION AGREED TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE ANNUAL REPORT ON RISK MANAGEMENT FOR 2023/24.**

#### **73.24 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 7 risks on the register, key risk movements and updated activities.

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

#### **74.24 GDPR ANNUAL REPORT**

The DPFR presented the report which provides details of breaches recorded between September 2023 and August 2024, with resulting actions and improvements made to address them. None of the breaches resulted in a formal investigation by the ICO. The report also details the current and on-going actions taken to protect College data.

A discussion ensued around increased awareness of the issues as a result of the actions and improvements; contingencies in place should the college suffer a cyber attack; risks around how AI can compromise GDPR.

### **THE CORPORATION NOTED GDPR ANNUAL REPORT.**

#### **75.24 HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT**

The DPFR presented the report which provides a summary of the Health and Safety performance for the academic year 2023/24 including internal audits, policy reviews, incidents and accidents and the work of the Health and Safety Committee. One accident was reported to the HSE to comply with RIDDOR in the period.

### **THE CORPORATION AGREED TO:**

- **NOTE THE CONTENTS THIS REPORT.**
- **NOTE THE KEY RISKS BEING MANAGED BY THE COLLEGE AND ACTIONS TAKEN.**

#### **76.24 GOVERNANCE REPORT**

The DoGov spoke to her report and highlighted the following:

- Update on the Revised AoC code of Governance.
- Updated FE and sixth-form college corporations: governance guide
- Governor appointment as reported earlier in the meeting:

- The re-appointment of Mr Eichhorn for a further term of office for an initial 1 year, with the option to extend to the full 4-year term of office upon review. Mr Eichhorn’s re-appointment was subsequently approved via Chair's action to ensure there would be no break in service.
- The appointment of Thamilarasi Jasitharan as Staff Governor as reported earlier in the meeting.

Governors recorded their thanks to Mr Derelikoylu for his service as Staff Governor; he has been a highly committed governor and champion of the college, and his contribution has been greatly appreciated.

**THE CORPORATION AGREED TO NOTE THE REPORT.**

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

**78.24 REFLECTIONS**

Corporation members discussed their reflections on the meeting.

**79.24 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

17 December 2024

**Staff and student Governors and members of staff withdrew ahead of Part two of the meeting which was recorded as confidential Minutes 80.24 – 82.24**

*The meeting closed at 9.25 pm.*

<b>These minutes have been approved by the Corporation as a correct record.</b>	
<b>CHAIR: Paul Butler</b>	<b>DATE: 17 December 2024</b>
	<b>REMOTE CONFIRMATION:</b>
	<b>OR SIGNED:</b>