

## Meeting of the Corporation Board

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> October 20 24 , 4.30 pm

**Present:** Phil Smith (External Governor, Chair of the Corporation, PS)  
 Danny Alfaraj (Staff Governor, DAL)  
 Tony Antonius (External Governor, TA)  
 Andrea Arlidge (External Governor, AA)  
 Steve Bennett (External Governor, SB)  
 Neil Dimes (External Governor, ND)  
 Sandra Gordon (External Governor, SG)  
 Julia Gray, Principal & CEO (Ex-officio, P&CEO, JG))  
 Marc Griffiths (External Governor, MG)  
 Daniel Jones (External Governor, DJ)  
 Judi Harper (External Governor, JH)  
 Shaista Mahmood (Student Governor, SM)  
 Palie Smart (External Governor, PSM)  
 Shawn Smith (External Governor, SS)  
 Zoe Taylor (External Governor, ZT)  
 Steven Tunn (Staff Governor, ST)  
 Jess Winkler (External Governor, JW)

**In attendance:** Catherine Howett, Deputy Principal (DP)  
 Tim Peacock, Chief Operating Officer (COO)  
 Hayley Shaw, Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development (DHRD)  
 Lynette Wilson, Director of Governance & Clerk to the Corporation  
 Jessica Thorne, Corporate Services Officer (CSO)

Min. No.	
1a	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND QUORUM</b> Apologies were <b>accepted</b> from Stephen Boardman (SBD) and Dan Amin (DA)
b	<b>Declarations of interest in any agenda items:</b> None.
c	<b>Confidentiality of agenda items</b> It was noted that any discussion of pay award was confidential (6b).
2a	<b>MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 15TH JULY 2024</b>  The minutes of the previous meetings held on 15 July 2024 were confirmed as an accurate record and <b>approved</b> by the Board.

<p><b>b</b></p>	<p><b>Review of actions and any matters arising, including written resolutions since the last meeting:</b></p> <p>There were three written resolutions passed since the last meeting, which were included in the paper pack and <b>noted</b> for records:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ProSuite</li> <li>• Ashley Down Window Refurbishment</li> <li>• Safeguarding Policy</li> </ul> <p><b>Use of College Seal:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was <b>noted</b> that the College seal had been applied to the IoT Deeds.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>PRINCIPAL &amp; CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT</b></p> <p>Members received a verbal update from the P&amp;CEO.</p> <p>It was noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regarding Skills England: The CEO position had been revised and re-advertised.</li> <li>• The government's autumn statement would be due in the coming weeks. National Insurance contributions were proposed to increase, which would mean an impact on the College's budget. The annual impact of a 1% increase would be around £160,000, which was a significant sum.</li> <li>• The P&amp;CEO had a positive visit from the DfE, who were pleased with the level of growth seen at the College.</li> </ul> <p>[SG entered the meeting]</p> <p>The use of the Parkway site would be changing following the end of the partnership with DAF. The Senior Leadership Team were reviewing the skills pipeline needs within the region. The P&amp;CEO and COO met with WECA and South Gloucestershire Council representatives for a tour of the Parkway campus. The Senior Leadership Team were facilitating positive conversations with South Gloucestershire MPs to help find solutions and opportunities for the use of the spaces at Parkway. Initially the short-term plans were for some changes to the Parkway building, with a view in the long-term to review the facilities at the Advanced Engineering Centre.</p> <p>Governors expressed a wish for the College to take opportunities for joined up working with universities on local skills planning and pathways where possible.</p> <p>It was noted that the College has been nominated for a Smarter Working Live Awards. The College had been nominated in the Putting People First Category.</p> <p>[JW joined the meeting]</p>
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER</b></p> <p>The Risk Register was submitted to the Board prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair of the Audit Committee provided the Board with assurance that the Risk Register had been looked at during the last committee.</p>

	<p>The Chair of the Audit Committee stated that the Audit Committee will be starting to take a deep dive into a couple of the risks each committee meeting, beginning with the two strands of digital risk at the March meeting. Senior Leads for each strand will be invited to attend the committee meeting to provide assurance in this area.</p> <p>It was noted that the committee agreed to the alignment of the scoring scales for current risk and risk appetite on the register, in order to make the register easier to interpret.</p> <p>[MG joined the meeting]</p>
<p>5</p>	<p><b>HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 23/24</b> <b>Review from Finance and Resources Committee</b></p> <p>A H&amp;S Annual Report was provided to the Board prior to the meeting.</p> <p>A member from the Finance and Resources Committee provided the Board with assurance that the committee had seen and reviewed the report in the last committee meeting.</p> <p>The Board questioned why the RIDDOR incidents were higher than they have been previously, The COO explained that reporting had improved and there was greater staff awareness of the importance of prompt reporting, to ensure issues were addressed quickly.</p> <p>The Board questioned the College's obligations regarding Health and Safety for work experience students.</p> <p>It was stated that work experience placement obligations were being met. Placement checking was carried out dependant on the level of risk, so that a proportionate level of assessment was undertaken. Assessments were carried out by a suitably qualified staff member. Visits to students on-site depended on the length of the placement and the risk-levels identified.</p> <p>It was noted that there is an audit tracker, seen by the Audit Committee, which continues to monitor the improvements in the Health and Safety areas raised during an audit from the previous year.</p> <p>It was agreed that consideration needed to be given to this area of crossover between the two committees. <b>ACTION: Clerk</b></p> <p>The Board questioned whether the site walks reference in the paper covered the subsidiary companies.</p> <p>It was confirmed that they did.</p>
<p>6</p> <p>a</p>	<p><b>FINANCE</b></p> <p>The Management Accounts (P12) were submitted as a paper prior to the meeting.</p> <p><b>Management Accounts</b> Management accounts were presented for the year-end 2023-24.</p>

<p>b</p>	<p>It was noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The surplus for the year was just over 4 million (which was ahead of budget).</li> <li>• There was a positive cash balance.</li> <li>• FEC benchmark was met.</li> <li>• Banking covenants were met.</li> <li>• Pension contributions were funded, and had increased year-on-year.</li> </ul> <p>It was noted that the EFSA were happy with the College’s finances and commentary in the CFFR document. It was of such high-quality that they had asked if the COO could provide support to other organisations with preparing their own. The P&amp;CEO thanked the COO for their excellent work.</p> <p>The Board questioned the figures for the teachers’ pension grant. It was stated that the DfE have funded the increased contributions from colleges over the past 6 years.</p> <p>The Board discussed the overspend on agency staff fees and questioned why it was so high. The DHROD explained that it had been very difficult to recruit to specialist construction and engineering roles. The majority of agency fees were relating to these posts. These workers were in high-demand and many of them preferred being able to work flexibly, rather than permanent roles. Employment via the BPS subsidiary company was an option being utilised where possible. It was stated that the budget is drawn up with this knowledge in mind.</p> <p>The COO confirmed the College would be able to invest 1.7million in capital in the next year. The spending review will look at internal estates’ strategy, reviewing what essential work needs to be completed over the next 5 years.</p> <p><b>CONFIDENTIAL Pay Review Update</b> Confidential minutes.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p><b>QUALITY REPORT UPDATE</b></p> <p>The Quality Report was submitted to the Board prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal spoke of the excellent targeted work carried out in the previous academic year to improve the quality of teaching and positive outcomes for students, and the impact on achievements at year-end. There had been a focus on a mindset shift for leaders and managers and on improving access to information and data. Staff now had the skills and tools to enable them to make autonomous decisions, empowering leaders and managers to take action and manage impacts.</p> <p>Governors passed on their congratulations to the DP and her team. They noted particularly the following positive from the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The positive improvements to the journey for high-needs students, particularly within the 16-18 age group.</li> <li>• Improvements made to English and maths attendance.</li> <li>• The College’s cultural journey, on a path of raising aspirations.</li> <li>• Positive changes to student attitudes and behaviours.</li> </ul>

- Staff were more motivated and engaged; they were provided with excellent CPD activities, and taking an interest in their own development.

Governors questioned whether the College was satisfied with its recruitment over the summer.

It was stated that the College would end the first half term with 400+ students than originally allocated for. The College has grown its market share considerably.

It was stated that the College response has not just been to recruit more teachers but also to grow the wrap around care.

The Board stated that the College needed to ensure retention of these students too. It was stated that retention has been strong so far.

A Staff Governor shared feedback from their area's recent Programme Manager appraisals. There had been lots of investment in staff, ensuring they are heard and valued. They had really felt the impact of this across their team. There had been a positive impact from the Management Academy training, particularly on how performance issues were managed.

The Board questioned whether attendance data was examined per site.

It was stated that there is filtering of data by campus and that this is to be an area of focus for campus leads.

The Board questioned the low attendance percentages in English and maths.

It was stated that this reflected a national issue.

The English and maths team held weekly team meetings, identifying barriers to attendance and implementing individualised support. Certificates and prizes were awarded to students with good attendance. The College was on a journey to help students make mindset changes and break down a history of negative mindset around some subjects, so that they could hit their achievement goals.

The Board queried the support for students with dyslexia.

It was stated that lot of work was being carried out to support students with dyslexia.

Exam Access Arrangements were put in place for SEND students and referrals were made for students where they had potential or undiagnosed issues. The ALS Team assess and put support in place for new students.

**ACTION:** Further discussion about support for dyslexic students to be picked up at C&Q Committee.

Governors who had been involved in the recent departmental Self-Assessment Reviews with the Quality Team were thanked for their contributions.

Governors sought assurance that the College's safeguarding procedures still maintained their robustness, despite the increase in student numbers.

The P&CEO acknowledged the increased demand on wrap-around support services, such as safeguarding, Exams and ALS, which was being carefully considered to ensure that there was an appropriate resourcing.

Governors asked whether the College had identified a limit on numbers.

	<p>The P&amp;CEO explained that the College hadn't set an upper limit cap and hadn't yet reached full capacity, except for some individual courses. Staff utilisation was generally very good but it was stated that there could be better utilisation of spaces on a Friday.</p>
<p><b>8</b></p> <p><b>a</b></p>	<p><b>POLICIES</b></p> <p><b>Reserves Policy</b> (recommended from Finance and Resources Committee with revisions).</p> <p>This new policy was presented by the COO, reflecting best practice outlined in the College Financial Handbook.</p> <p>One small typo was identified. <b>ACTION: COO to amend policy typo.</b></p> <p>The policy was <b>approved</b> by the Board.</p>
<p><b>b</b></p>	<p><b>Staff Code of Conduct</b> (recommended from Finance and Resources Committee)</p> <p>The DHROD had revised the Code of Conduct to include freedom of information matters. A union consultation was undertaken. One typo: 7.8/7.9 numbering correction. <b>ACTION: DHROD.</b></p> <p>The Staff Code of Conduct was <b>approved</b> by the Board.</p>
<p><b>c</b></p>	<p><b>Admissions Policy</b></p> <p>It was noted that some areas of the policy were expanded, including details for international applicants. It was noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details were added to the enrolment process section, outlining that if an applicant is aggressive towards staff, the College would withdraw their place/offer.</li> <li>• In addition, if an applicant hadn't actively accepted their place, and did not turn up when invited, they would forfeit their place. This would help staff to manage the capacity of oversubscribed courses, where some students do not attend when invited.</li> <li>• The policy stated that students would have 30 days to accept an offer. Governors asked if individuals would be reminded during the 30-day period. The Deputy Principal would check the process with the relevant Director and confirm. <b>ACTION: Deputy Principal</b></li> <li>• A Governor suggested inserting the link to the other policy on the website, when referring to another policy.</li> </ul> <p>The Admissions Policy was <b>approved</b> by the Board.</p> <p><b>Data Protection Policy and associated procedures:</b> The Clerk stated that policies were being updated to reflect the change in the DPO staff member and with the new College branding. There would be no changes to the content. The Board <b>approved</b> these changes going ahead.</p>
<p><b>9</b></p> <p><b>a</b></p>	<p><b>COMMITTEE REPORTS</b></p> <p><b>Finance and Resources</b></p> <p>The DHROD highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CIPD Awards: The College's HR won Best HR Team Award in September 2024.</li> </ul>

<p>b</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff survey: It was stated that the College was going to explore using a new survey May 2025,</li> <li>• Staff turnover was under 10% last academic year, which was a marked reduction on the previous year.</li> </ul> <p><b>Audit</b></p> <p>The committee had received the Internal Auditor’s Annual Report and confirmed that the auditor’s overall opinion was that the College had reasonable and effective risk management controls and governance processes in place.</p> <p>A draft Audit Plan for 2024-25 was shared at the committee along with discussion about linking topics to risks within the Strategic Risk Register.</p> <p>An updated Declaration of Interests Policy was approved by the committee. A separate policy for Corporation Members was to be drafted by the Clerk.</p>
<p>c</p>	<p><b>Search and Governance</b></p> <p>The Board were reminded that Steve Bennett had stepped down from the Vice Chair role and the Chair of C&amp;Q Committee role.</p> <p>In line with the College values and as discussed at the strategic planning day, it was important to demonstrate openness as a Board with nomination procedures. The committee had adopted a procedure for the process of election of Chair/Vice Chair and Committee Chairs.</p> <p>Key points for note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Election of C&amp;Q committee chair would happen at the next committee meeting.</li> <li>• Election for the Vice Chair would be held at next Board meeting in December.</li> <li>• At least 3 weeks before the Board meeting, Clerk will share a call for nominations.</li> <li>• The Board suggested amendments to allow committee chairs to be nominated outside of the committee, so it can include members who are not yet on the committee. It was recommended to reference to the College’s relevant EDI policy, within the process document. <b>ACTION: Clerk</b></li> </ul> <p>Regarding the yearly DfE data audit, the Committee agreed to widen ED&amp;I questions, which the Clerk would review soon.</p> <p>Members agreed to appoint Palie Smart to the Search and Governance Committee. This was <b>ratified</b> by the Board.</p> <p>[ZT left the meeting at 6pm]</p>
<p>10</p>	<p><b>SUBSIDIARY COMPANIES</b></p> <p>Discussions were underway with Subsidiaries, to ensure there were appropriate standing items at Board meetings, especially around Risk Management. The COO would keep the Board updated on progress.</p>

<p><b>a</b></p> <p><b>b</b></p> <p><b>c</b></p>	<p><b>Partners in Bristol</b> The COO provided a verbal update. There had been significant growth with training bootcamps and a number of WECA bids were successful. PiB outcomes were very strong, with a very high percentage of adults moving into employment after training. There were some challenges with delivery outside of the regional area, where financial targets were not met. The DWP work had lessened around the time of change in government leadership. PiB had ended below its initial targets for the previous financial year.</p> <p><b>South West Apprenticeship Company</b> SWAC had under-recruited in one key area, which was delivered to schools; start dates were delayed by three months. An additional change to processes and systems in-year with the associated costs meant that SWAC had made a loss in the previous year.</p> <p><b>Bristol Professional Services</b> It was <b>noted</b> that Julia Gray was appointed as a Director at the most recent BPS meeting.</p>
<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p>Governors stated a recommendation to consider any growth-related costs, including for additional costs like a staff needed within safeguarding team.</p> <p>Regarding course place offers to students, governors questioned the legal obligation on the College. It was stated that the College would make every effort to honour places offered. However, FE was not the same as HE institutions where it is a legal obligation to honour the place offered.</p> <p>Governors stated that they were pleased with the format of the Strategy Day in October; they had found it to be engaging, with contributions made by all members.</p>
<p><b>12</b></p>	<p><b>DATES OF CORPORATION MEETINGS THIS YEAR</b></p> <p>17th December 2024 – 16:30-18:30 25th March 2025 - 16:30-18:30 15th July 2025 - 16:30-18:30</p>

**ACTIONS**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Consider how to manage crossover between areas of risk assurance between Audit and Finance and Resources Committee	21.10.24	Clerk	ASAP
Information about any impact on non-teaching staff, if change the teaching delivery model to 828 hours, to be	21.10.24	DHROD	17.12.24

brought to the Board when this proposal is presented.			
Further discussion about support for dyslexic students to be picked up at C&Q Committee.	21.10.24	Deputy Principal (DP)	26.11.2024
Reserves Policy, correct typo.	21.10.24	COO	Completed 22.10.24
Code of Conduct, correct typo.	21.10.24	DHROD	Completed 22.10.24
Admissions policy stated that students would have 30 days to accept an offer. Governors asked if individuals would be reminded during the 30-day period? The Deputy Principal would check the process.	21.10.24	Deputy Principal (DP)	17.12.24
Make recommended amendments to the Board Vice Chairs and Committee Chairs nomination processes	21.10.24	Clerk	01.11.24

Approved as a correct record by the Board on 17 December 2024.