

THE TRAFFORD COLLEGE GROUP

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of the Corporation
held on Wednesday 17 May 2023 at 5.30pm
in the Aspire Restaurant at the Altrincham Campus**

Present:	Graham Luccock James Scott *Charlotte Barrett Jill Bottomley Olivia Bussey Fatema Desai Sarah Drake Janet Grant Jed Hassid Heather Lang *Emily McIntosh Michelle McLaughlin Jonathan O'Brien *Marcia Reynolds Louise Richardson *Uswah Sayyed	(Chairperson) (Principal and Chief Executive Officer) (Staff Member) (Student Member)
In Attendance:	Barry Watson Carmen Gonzalez-Eslava Kal Kay Carl Miles Michelle Leslie Alison Duncalf	(Corporation Secretary) (Deputy Principal) (Chief Finance Officer) (Director of Marketing and External Relations) (Vice Principal Corporate Services and Planning) (Deputy Corporation Secretary)

* Attended via Microsoft Teams

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COR/31/23 Apologies for Absence

The Corporation Secretary (CS) reported that apologies for absence had been received from Alison Hewitt, Lina Tsui-Cheung and Jeremy Woodside.

Ayo Oyebode and Adele Carney was not in attendance.

COR/32/22 Declarations of Direct or Indirect Interests in any of the meetings business items

There were no declarations of Direct or Indirect Interests in any of the meetings business items.

COR/33/23 Minutes of the Board of the Corporation Meeting held on 29 March 2023

The minutes of the meeting, were approved and accepted as a correct account of the meetings proceedings.

Minute No.**COR/34/23 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

The Chairperson referred members to the previously circulated summary and progress concerning the actions arising from the minutes and earlier meetings of the Board of the Corporation.

It was confirmed that that majority of the actions were closed and those that remained open were in the future in terms of their action.

There were no further issues raised by members arising from the minutes

COR/35/23 Annual Marketing and Market Share Report 2021/2022

The Director of Marketing and External Relations (DMER) referred members to the previously circulated Annual Marketing and Market Share Report 2021/2022.

The DMER outlined the background to the report and information in respect of the collation and interpretation of the data, collected retrospectively, which was used to reasonably identify and predict trends and past performance.

A summary of the key emerging themes in respect 16-19 learners; adults; apprenticeships; and Higher Education was presented.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A member sought clarity over appendix A and the numbering in relation to the tables therein.

The DMER confirmed the mislabelling and undertook to revise the report accordingly.

Action: Director of Marketing and External Relations

There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Annual Marketing and Market Share Report 2021-2022 be received and noted.

COR/36/23 Marketing and External Relations Strategy 2022/2023

The DMER referred members to the previously circulated report and information in relation to the Marketing and External Relations Strategy 2022/2023.

There was confirmation that the Strategy would be used to segment and engage with customers and that the stakeholders that sat under the Group's three Strategic Priorities of supporting learners, working in a transformational basis with employers, and defining and delivering the role as an anchor institution.

The following aspects of the Strategy were highlighted:

- the purpose, mission, vision and values of the organisation
- the priority areas of the Group and the identified marketing priorities in relation to 16-19 learners; Adults, Apprenticeships, HE and Employers; and the Group and the individual colleges.

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In respect of the identified proposed strategy and marketing priorities the following was outlined:

- the focus upon 16-19 recruitment at lower levels, which included enhanced school liaison programmes and a curriculum offer supported by the successful College Ready Programme
- engagement with local authorities which would build upon the announcement earlier in the day from the Greater Manchester (GM) Mayor, in relation to his vision for a new integrated Technical Education system for the city region, which was committed to ensuring technical education had the same parity of esteem and clarity of purpose as academic education
- the positioning of the Group as a provider of academic and skills education
- understanding of the opportunity presented from the new integrated Technical Education system in terms of collaboration across GM whilst continuing to develop the Group's own unique selling points
- the more mature market presented by the Adult, Apprenticeships, HE and Employer provision
- the need to improve awareness and interest from internal and external target audiences by increasing share of focus versus the 16-19 marketing activity and expenditure
- to effectively market the Level 3 skills guarantee, free courses job offers and related opportunities
- the leveraging of HE visibility via the Group's HE Strategy
- the market research conducted around the perception and reputation of the individual colleges and the appetite for a relationship to The Trafford College Group (TTCG)
- the work undertaken earlier in the year in relation to a proposed new name for the Group and the aim of implementing a new brand architecture from the start of the 2023/2024 academic year.

Members raised a number of issues arising from the presentation as follows:

- A member highlighted the challenges around ESOL and asked whether there were any connections to supporting students from the Ukraine and Hong Kong.

The Principal and CEO (PCEO) responded that there was demand and links there but that the issue was about how the Group responded. It was noted that the issue was more around the resourcing of the support as opposed to demand.

- A member commented on the layout of the Strategy and preceding report in relation to market share. It was asked if the intention was to "weave" the market share data into the objectives. The member indicated that they would be happy to explore this aspect further with the DMER.

The DMER welcomed the offer and undertook to pursue the matter outside of the meeting.

Action: Director of Marketing and External Relations/Marketing Link Governor

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The PCEO added that there was also further work to be undertaken underneath the strategy in relation to the types of provision, to enable greater understanding of the areas that the Group may wish to pursue and the subject areas to be focused upon.

- The inclusion of value added was welcomed by a member and it was asked as to how this would be achieved.

The DMER responded that a leadership working group was looking at school transformation programmes and the opportunities to engage and work with schools with a view to adding value. It was noted that a proposal in relation to an offer around master classes had recently been articulated.

The PCEO further referred to the GM Mayor speech earlier in the day and his reference to a M-Bacc (Manchester Baccalaureate) which would aim to ensure that young people at key stage 4 had a clear line of sight to technical education pathways should they not wish to follow a purely academic route.

The PCEO suggested that this was an area where there was potential for the GM colleges to progress an offer via a common approach. It was added that the schools in Trafford and Stockport were open to this notion and there was a willingness to engage. A member concurred with this view consistent with their experience as a Trust Board member.

There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Marketing and External Relations Strategy 2022/2023 be approved and implemented.

Action: Director of Marketing and External Relations

COR/37/23

Strategic Focus Discussion

The PCEO referred members to the previously circulated report and an update on the Group's strategic direction, Operational Plan and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) since the March 2023 reports.

Developments were summarised under 3 major areas of focus - Finance and Funding; People and Resources; and Curriculum and Quality. The following was highlighted:

Finance and Funding

- An expectation that the Group's financial forecast be in line with the KPI measure of "Good" for financial health.
- The key risk to income continued to be the achievement of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) and the focus continued to be maximising recruitment of adult learners across the final term.
- Members were referred to the additional information as presented within the Chief Finance Officer's (CFO) report.

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People and Resources

- It was reported that there had been some developments since the last meeting of the Board of the Corporation, with the focus on recruitment and retention continuing to be prevalent.
- In terms of industrial relations, agreement had now been agreed with UCU with negotiations being ongoing with NEU where there had been an indication of willingness to engage over wellbeing aspects. There was confirmation that agreement had not been reached with UNISON.
- Confirmation that the real living wage had been paid since April 2023.
- That the previous day an announcement had been made to staff in relation an intention of the commencement of a Strategic Review of the Curriculum, mainly in respect of the Stockport and Cheadle campuses, which would present some changes from September to reduce duplication and rationalise provision with other aspects to be progressed from 2025.

Curriculum and Quality

- The retention of young people was a risk (target and position as at May 2023 of 91%) with any further deterioration likely to have an impact on the KPI.
- As the end of the academic year approached the focus was on supporting students with their final assessments and maximising achievement and value-added outcomes.
- Apprenticeship outcomes were predicted to be significantly improved on the previous year although there remained risk on some programme areas due to on-going staff resource issues (Pharmacy; Construction and Building Services).

Other Strategic Developments

- The development of the draft Accountability Statement and how the Group intended to focus on meeting national, regional and local skills priorities for 2023/2024 (later agenda item).
- The positive work of the Group taking place with Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) on their approach to developing a new post-16 education and skills plan.
- The close working relationship between the Group and the Greater Manchester Colleges (GMC) and the Combined Authority (GMCA) on understanding the implications from the new Greater Manchester (GM) “Devo” deal, specifically the aspect around post-16 technical qualifications.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- With respect to the recent announcement around a Strategic Review of the Curriculum, a question was asked by a member as to how staff had reacted to the proposals.

The PCEO responded that following the webinar the question-and-answer sessions had been very productive with some good questions raised. It was added, that in relation to changes for 2023, the next step would be the holding of meetings with the areas likely to be impacted upon which would be progressed at pace.

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In relation to the pay settlement for 2022/2023 and the ongoing dialogue with the trade unions, a member enquired as to the proportions of union membership.

The Vice Principal Corporate Services and Planning (VPCSP) was unable to confirm the numbers but suggested that UCU had teacher membership across the Group whilst NEU was more prevalent for some Stockport College contracts and at the Cheadle and Marple campuses.

There were no further questions or comments from members and following due consideration and deliberation it was resolved that the Strategic Update be received and noted.

COR/38/23 Draft Annual Accountability Statement 2023/2024

The PCEO referred members to the previously circulated draft of the proposed Accountability Statement (AS) for 2023/2024 which set out the Group's key objectives in meeting national, regional and local skills priorities.

The PCEO outlined the background to the requirement now placed on FE Colleges in respect of the new statement. There was confirmation the targets sought to reflect how the Group was contributing to the priorities outlined in the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), led by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce and the Mayoral Combined Authority, as well as the contribution being made to National Skills Priorities as set out in the Department for Education (DfE) guidance.

It was stated that this was the first time that both the Group and the wider sector were producing an Annual AS and that the government was committed to streamlining the associated funding and accountability framework.

The PCEO indicated that the other dimension related to the LSIP, adding that the AS set out how the Group proposed to meet its 4 objectives. It was noted that the objectives had been set with regard to the LSIP but that they were not the only driver of the AS.

It was confirmed that the Board of the Corporation was required to approve the draft AS in advance of its submission in draft format by 31 May 2023, with a final version to be submitted by 31 July 2023.

Members were referred to the draft document and the following content was outlined:

- The Group's Purpose and context
- Approach to Developing the Accountability Statement
 - Engagement with Civic Partners
 - Engagement with Employers and Employer Representative Bodies
 - Curriculum Planning and Engagement with the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)
 - Meeting the Needs of GM Growth Locations
- Contribution to National, Regional and Local Priorities
- Accountability Statement Objectives 2023/2024
- Growth Targets against National Skills Priorities.

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It was confirmed that a key element of the AS was the Group's objectives for 2023/2024 which had the overarching themes of:

- Continuing to respond effectively to the government reform agenda around technical education;
- Further developing a more responsive offer to support adult entry into work/progression within work;
- Improving the quality and offer of our Apprenticeship provision to better meet the needs of employers and our economy;
- Continuing to develop our approach to transformational relationships with employers to better understand and respond to specific skills needs; and
- Contributing to the development of a clear and effective post-16 plan in the Stockport area given the context of two mergers within a three-year period to ensure an offer was in place to better respond to the borough's needs.

The PCEO commented that the 5 overarching objectives aligned to the Group's Strategic Plan and further included improvement of the quality of apprenticeships consistent with the Ofsted recommendation.

There was confirmation that the objective in relation to employers was aligned to the Group's Employer Strategy and that the final objective was reflective of the Post 16 Plan that was currently under development.

In concluding, the PCEO reported that the LSIP for GM did not currently exist. It was reported that plans were being developed at a local authority level with a view to building an overall GM position. The PCEO stated that the Group was currently in receipt of some local authority targets in advance of the publication of LSIP. There was confirmation that once the finalised LSIP was made available there may be a requirement, on the part of the Group, to make some corresponding revisions to its AS.

In terms of the LSIP under development and the "Data from the Greater Manchester Local Skills Improvement Plan" document, it was suggested that this had currently only been developed using reports at a college provider level and there had not currently been any account taken of other potential private providers within GM. In terms of identified "gaps" it was also suggested that the researcher has focused their assessment on where they considered that there was not currently a college offer. There was confirmation that appropriate feedback had been submitted accordingly.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A member, with reference to the development of the AS and engagement with local authorities and other key bodies, made reference to the Business Growth Company which it was suggested colleges had access to.

Clarity was provided with respect to the relationship and position in informing the statement.

- A member commented on Group's Strategic Priority Objectives and the action to support the development of the "Skills Hub" concept in the Merseyway district. It was asked how well the Group was placed in terms of the infrastructure and delivering on the commitment during 2023/2024.

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The PCEO responded that the Group was committed to having a presence in the Merseyway Centre. It was stated that the Business and Professional School had had this role prior to Covid and following the completion of the rationalisation of this provision at Cheadle and Stockport it was intended that the progression curriculum would have a physical presence at the centre.

- Clarity was sought by a member in respect of references within the LSIP data document to FBPS.

There was confirmation that the abbreviation related to Financial and Business Professional Services

- The member further commented that within the document there was a significant amount of good information but that there was a risk of it becoming “lost in the noise””.

The PCEO stated that there was a need to recognise that in the short term the LSIP may present more questions than answers. It was added that the focus was around ensuring the “right” information was going out to employers.

- An issue was raised by a member around the new qualifications and how they would be communicated. It was suggested that there was a lot of confusion around this aspect.

The PCEO commented that this was where there was a need for the government to step in and promote the new offer. The PCEO stated that there is optimism following the GM Mayor’s recent announcement, in which there was reference to the skills route and that this route would be made clear to both parents and students. It was added that it was believed that there would be support within GM with respect to the promotion and raising of the profile of the new qualifications.

The PCEO cautioned that this could become quite a busy and competitive market place and that it should be viewed as presenting opportunities for collaboration.

Reference was also made to the work being undertaken by the Group in terms of careers advice in schools during which there had been a lot of useful discussion over the different qualifications. Assurance was provided by the Deputy Principal (DP) that the Group was at the heart of these discussions with young people.

- A member made reference to the Growth Targets against National Skills Priorities and sought clarity over some of the numbers in the table.

The PCEO undertook to sense check the data.

Action: Principal and CEO

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There were no further comments or issues raised by members and following due consideration and deliberation it was resolved that the Group's Draft Accountability Statement for 2023/2024 be approved in advance of its submission to the Department for Education.

COR/39/23 Annual Strategic Conversation with External Agencies – Meeting Outcomes

The PCEO referred to the impending Annual Strategic Conversation with external agencies, namely the DfE and the FE Commissioner's Office as scheduled to take place on 18 May 2023.

There was confirmation that the meeting would look at developments since the last conversation took place and would include aspects such the Ofsted inspection and funding for the Cheadle redevelopment. It was added that it was also expected that there would be significant discussion around the meeting of national, regional and local needs.

The PCEO stated that the meeting would commence with a presentation from the external agencies addressing key issues and was likely to include government funding, the funding drive to support FE workforce recruitment and simplification of the funding methodology.

It was suggested that anecdotal feedback from other local colleges was that the external agencies were invested in a collaborative approach.

The issue of the huge gap between school and FE pay was highlighted. It was suggested that should the Department for Education (DfE) reach an agreement nationally, which was projected to be in the region of at least 5%, this gap would widen even further.

Wider debate took place around the lack of long-term thinking at a national level with regard to the FE sector.

There were no further comments or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the position in relation to the impending Annual Strategic Conversation with External Agencies be received and noted.

COR/40/23 Subcontracting and Partner Provision 2023/2024

The DP referred members to the previously circulated paper and information on the proposed subcontracted and partnership activity for 2023/2024.

The background to the Group's approach to subcontracting activity was outlined including the work that had taken place to reduce the amount of subcontracting activity in recent years, consistent with the guidance from the ESFA, but also taking into account curriculum intent and the strategic reasons for working with each of the partners.

There was confirmation that no subcontracting activity was being proposed for adults in 2023/2024 and that the 16-18 provision was well below the ESFA requirement for subcontracting by funding stream to be less than 25%.

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The DP highlighted the following aspects of the proposed subcontracting arrangements:

- the summary list of the proposed contractor and partnership arrangements for 2023/2024;
- that there was only one change to the subcontractor arrangements for the current academic year with the introduction of Organisational learning Centre (OLC) to support growth in HE;
- there was confirmation that the value of this contract would not require permission from the ESFA/DfE as the funding was outside the scope of the provision they funded;
- in relation to partnerships there was confirmation that there were no new partners, however the overall request was to increase the number of students and the contract value; and
- that the proposals constituted the maximum value for 2023/2024 but finalisation would not take place until the final stages of the business planning process had been completed and the full impact known.

There were no comments or issues raised by members and following due consideration and deliberation it was resolved that:

- (a) the proposals for subcontracting activities for 2023/2024 as presented by approved; and
- (b) the proposed increase to partnership activities to a maximum total value be on the understanding that there be no negative impact on the 2023/2024 budget.

COR/41/23 National Achievement Rates Table 2021/2022

The Deputy Principal referred members to the information in relation to the final Qualification Achievement Rates (QAR) for all types of provision for the Group for the academic year 2021/2022.

It was noted that the data provided a comparison to the national averages for General Further Education (GFE) colleges and to other FE colleges in GM following the publication of the National Achievement Rates Tables (NARTs). It was further noted that that the data encompassed overall Education and Training (E&T) and Apprenticeship provision and was presented by Qualification type, Level and Subject Sector Area (SSA).

The following was highlighted:

- that this was the first time this data had been published since 2018/2019
- the overview and summary of key issues in relation to the Group's performance
- confirmation that performance was in line with the national averages for E&T across all ages
- performance was stronger for adults than 16-18s with a very positive position for English and maths, both GCSE and for Basic English and maths provision
- performance in respect of 16-18s was largely aligned to the 2 other GM colleges with significant A level provision
- recognition that when analysing the profile of the qualifications of the best performing colleges, the structure of their study programmes for young

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people were different to that of the Group, with a significant proportion of shorter qualifications with very high achievement rates attached to main programmes

- further analysis of the data and better performing colleges would be taking place to assess whether the Group would wish to make any changes
- compared to national averages, the main issues were the 16-18 provision for Construction, Planning and the Built Environment and for adult provision Education and Training plus the issues in relation to Apprenticeships that were already known.

There was confirmation that the emerging themes would be considered further by the FE Curriculum and Quality Committee.

Action: FE Curriculum and Quality Committee

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A member commented that the data was consistent with issues already known, such as Construction and the staffing aspects and the subsequent impact on retention and achievement.

The DP responded that this area continued to be a challenge. It was stated that Plumbing was starting to stabilise but it was recognised that future small staffing changes could again have a detrimental impact.

In respect of Construction, assurances were provided that the Group was proactively seeking to resolve the recruitment issues.

The PCEO added that the other aspect of Construction related to the issue of the management of data. There was confirmation that during Covid a number of students disengaged and the timely close down of their records was delayed. There was recognition that this was the appropriate course of action, at this time, but that there had been a subsequent negative impact where the student did not re-engage. A further issue relating to the leadership and management of data was highlighted aligned to the timeliness of the IQA and the knock-on effect in closing records.

- A member commented that retention was also a significant issue for the university sector at the moment, aligned to gaps in education and ongoing impact of post Covid mental health trauma. It was suggested that this could be a long, protracted issue particularly when adding in the cost-of-living crisis and the notion of “earning versus learning”.

Members commended the honesty of the report and the analysis distinguishing the difference between the Group and the best performing establishments.

There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the report and information in relation to the National Achievement Rates Table 2021/2022 be received and noted that further consideration of the report be undertaken by the FE Curriculum and Quality Committee.

Minute No.**Action: FE Curriculum and Quality Committee**
COR/42/23 Minutes of the FE Curriculum and Quality Committee held on 13 March 2023

The minutes of the meeting were received and noted and the Chairperson of the Committee provided a brief overview of the items considered by the Committee.

The Chairperson of the Committee drew attention to:

- the position in relation to retention
- the improvements that had been made to the quality of teaching consistent with the focus on CPD and the CDAR process
- the Quality Improvement Cycle, which at this stage in the year was prioritising quality improvement and the support and monitoring of “at risk” courses
- the positives emerging from the developmental and short lesson visits
- the outcomes of the mid-year Student Survey for which there was good compliance and a positive position in terms of the overall satisfaction rate (88%)
- the Student Governor update and the breadth of activities taking place across the Group
- the increased challenge and recording in relation to student incidents, many of which were low level, and indicative of the focus on staff training in relation to challenge and a consistency in approach
- despite the increase in recorded incidents there had not been a corresponding increase in the number of exclusions which had declined.

The PCEO commented that behaviour was also recurring theme within the LSIP.

There were no further issues or comments raised and it was resolved that the minutes be received and noted.

COR/43/23 Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

COR/44/23 Chief Finance Officer's Report and Management Accounts for the Period Ending 31 March 2023

Members were referred to the previously circulated Chief Finance Officers (CFO) Report and Management Accounts for the period ending 31 March 2023.

Reference was made to the accompanying information in relation to: -

- the Group's financial position;
- the economic picture;
- ONS reclassification updates; and
- financial planning assumptions.

There was confirmation that the Resources Committee had scrutinised the February 2023 accounts in detail, but that due to the timing of the meetings the March 2023 accounts were being presented at this time.

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A brief overview of the key issues from the accounts was provided within which the following was highlighted:

- that the Financial Health Grading continued to the forecast as Good and the year-to-date position was now also showing as good (was previously requires improvement) mainly due to the invoicing of High Needs income from Stockport MBC
- the EBITDA as a percentage of income had deteriorated since the last report, with the main reason being the adjustment to forecast of energy costs
- the previously considered banking covenant and effective breach had been discussed with Barclays and the External Auditors (Armstrong Watson) and there had been confirmation that this would not impact on the Group's going concern assessment at the year end
- the operational leverage was now the tightest covenant with headroom at £49k which means that any further deterioration in the EBITDA also risked ongoing compliance with this covenant
- a further increase in the banking base rate, recognising that whilst the Group's debt was a fixed and there would be benefit in terms of the returns on cash balances there would also be an impact on staff and their mortgage payments/financial commitments
- the inclusion of a further bite-sized guide on asset disposals
- receipt of the financial planning assumptions and the ongoing work and triangulation of curriculum plans, resource plans and non-pay budgets to meet control totals
- the accompanying dashboards, which provided no new information but had been included for completeness.

Questions and comments invited

- The Chairperson highlighted the discussion within the recent AoC Chief Executive's letter and the notion of partnership arrangements with conversations around key areas of expenditure which would include energy.

There were no further questions or comments raised by members and following due consideration and deliberation it was resolved that: -

- (a) the Chief Finance Officer's report be received and noted;
- (b) the Management Accounts for the period to 31 March 2023, including the year forecast for the financial year 2022/2023 be duly approved; and
- (c) the Governors Dashboard May 2023 and College Dashboard May 2023 be duly received and noted.

COR/45/23

Board Assurance and Risk Management Framework Update May 2023

The CFO referred members to the previously circulated report and the Board Assurance and Risk Management Framework update along with a summary of the Risk Assurance Framework and a visual heatmap.

Reference was made to the horizon scanning and emerging risks including the watch list under the headings of financial; staffing; students; and other corporate risks.

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There was confirmation that the Audit Committee had received the report and focused on the risks with a gross impact score higher than 15.

The 10 broader or emerging risks which had been considered were reported to be:

- Failure to respond to external factors such as curriculum reforms and policy changes leads to loss of funding, poor retention and decrease in student numbers;
- Inability to recruit, retain and develop the right staff and leaders with the right skills, knowledge and experience resulting in a reduction in quality, performance, and growth.
- Failure to support (new) members of the leadership team or address losses of senior or key personnel, particularly where there was key person dependency, leading to lack of strategic management or failure to complete key operational processes;
- Failure to realise the benefits of the capital project at Cheadle and deliver against the costs and time parameters leading to an additional strain on finances and/or student performance;
- Reduction of income due to a decline in student numbers impacting on viability of the Group specifically in areas of income volatility (16-18/AEB/Higher Education/Apprenticeships) or an increase in 16-18 student numbers requiring additional staff investment with lagged funding;
- Inability to maximise and diversify funding streams with a focus on full cost recovery and the maximising space and offer at Cheadle and Marple campuses, leading to increased pressure on the 4 key income streams;
- Failure to respond to change in regional and national government policy resulting in decline in income;
- Failure to deliver financial stability in the context of the two mergers, major capital developments, a global pandemic, unprecedented inflation rates and volatility of Government policy;
- Failure to manage the post-merger impact and integration of CAMSFC into the Group; with potential negative impact of immediate re-organisation and planned integration and creation of new merged TTG culture, values and provision, underpinned by continued financial stability;
- MIS staffing issues exacerbation leading to potential inability to maximise funding, respond to audits and to provide business intelligence.

There were no questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration and deliberation it was resolved that the Board of the Corporation was satisfied that the risks were being actively managed, and that appropriate controls were in place and that they were working effectively.

COR/46/23**Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting held on 24 April 2023**

The minutes of the meeting were received and noted and the Chairperson of the Committee provided a brief overview of the items considered by the Committee.

The Chairperson of the Committee drew attention to the following:

- consideration of the Data Protection Progress Report within which there were no new data breaches
- the Subcontractor Assurance Review 2023 which had been completed in accordance with the ESFA's Subcontracting Standards requirements from

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- which there was only one recommendation arising and which the Committee duly commended to the Board
- consideration of the Internal Audit Progress Report and audit visits and reports undertaken in respect of Information Technology General Control Review; Data Privacy; Adult Admissions and On Boarding; and Recruitment
- the extensive debate that took place around cyber security and data management
- the assurance provided in respect of the actioning of the recommendations (3 medium and 9 low) arising from the Data Privacy audit
- the areas of good practice identified as part of the Adult Admissions and On Boarding audit and identification of 5 areas of medium priority which resulted in an award of the level of assurance for Design as Limited and the Operational Effectiveness for controls in place as Moderate
- the very positive audit in respect of Recruitment which had no recommendations arising
- that 3 MIS External Review Audits (ESF Audit – Government Internal Audit Agency and GMCA AEB Compliance and Standards Monitoring
- consideration of the Board Assurance and Risk Management Update 2022/2023
- the good progress being made in respect of the Audit Tracker and management actions arising from earlier audit reports.

There were no issues or comments raised by members and it was resolved that the minutes be received and noted.

COR/47/23 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- (i) AUD/07/23 – Subcontracting Assurance Review 2023

There were no questions or comments raised by members and the Board of the Corporation unanimously approved the Audit Committee's recommendation that the Subcontracting Assurance Review 2023 be approved and subsequently uploaded, along with the relevant declaration, to the ESFA by 31 July 2023.

- (ii) AUD/09/23 – Internal Audit Visit 1 2022/2023 (in supporting information)

There were no questions or comments raised by members and Board of the Corporation unanimously approved the Audit Committee's recommendation that the Internal Audit Reports (Information Technology General Controls; Data Privacy; Admissions, Enrolment and Onboarding Review; and Recruitment) be approved.

There were no further matters arising from the minutes.

COR/48/23 Draft Minutes of the Resources Committee held on 26 April 2023

The minutes of the meeting were received and noted, and the Chairperson of the Committee provided a brief overview of the items considered by the Committee.

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The Chairperson of the Committee drew attention to the following key items considered by the Committee:

- Consideration of the Digital Strategy Mid-Year Update 2022/2023 noting the positive progress being attained whilst recognising that further work was required to improve links into the curriculum, with the main issue being around pace of change.
- Scrutiny of the Management Accounts for the period ending 28 February 2023.
- Updates in respect of both Employee Resources and the Sustainability Action Plan
- The policies that the Committee duly commended to the Board of the Corporation for approval. (Fees Policy and Supply Chain and Charging Fees Policy 2023/2024).

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A member commented on delivery of the Digital Strategy and asked whether there had been an impact on staff in terms of workload and stress.

The VPCSP responded that this aspect was part of a wider global discussion and was being addressed via a number of routes including via information from the Task and Finish Group as well as horizon scanning and assessment of change moving forward.

There were no further issues or comments raised by members and it was resolved that the minutes be received and noted.

COR/49/23**Matters Arising from the Minutes**

- (i) RES/24/23 – Management Accounts for Period Ending 28 February 2023

There were no further questions or comments from members in respect of the Management Accounts for the period ending 28 February 2023 as considered and approved as part of agenda item 5(a).

- (ii) RES/26/23 – Fees Policy 2023/024

There were no questions or comments raised by members and Board of the Corporation noted the Resources Committee's recommendation that the Fees Policy 2023/2024 be approved (agenda item 7 refers)

- (iii) RES/27/23 – Supply Chain and Fee Charges Policy 2023/2024

There were no questions or comments raised by members and Board of the Corporation noted the Resources Committee's recommendation that the Supply Chain and Fee Charges Policy 2023/2024 be approved (agenda item 7 refers).

There were no further matters arising.

Minute No.**COR/50/23 Governor Link Reports**

Members were referred to the previously circulated reports arising from Governor Link visits, that had taken place since the last meeting of the Board of the Corporation, as follows:

- Finance
- Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance
- Quality of Education
- Technical and Vocational Education including English and Maths.

There were no questions or comments raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the reports, arising from the Governor Link visits be received and noted.

COR/51/23 Draft Business Items Timetable and Schedule of Meetings 2023/2024

The CS referred members to the previously circulated Draft Schedule of Meetings 2023/2024 and Draft Business Items Timetable 2023/2024.

The CS outlined the background to the proposed Schedule of Meetings and confirmed that there were no significant changes to the approach taken for the current academic year. Reference was made to the training event scheduled to take place on 6 September 2023 where the focus would be upon a new governance portal (Team Engine). Governors were encouraged to attend this session.

Action: Governors

Assurance was provided that the meeting dates of the committees were such that they were aligned and reported into the Board of the Corporation meetings.

Attention was also drawn to the proposed Business Items Timetable for 2023/2024 and the introduction of the inclusion of the pertinent actions associated with each agenda item (receive and note; recommended to the Board of the Corporation for approval and approve).

There were no questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Schedule of Meetings for 2023/2024 and Business Items Timetable for 2023/2024 be duly approved and implemented.

Action: Corporation Secretary**COR/52/23 External Review of Governance Progress Update**

The CS provided a progress update on the External Review of Governance and the following was highlighted:

- the accompanying information in respect of the associated timeline and the schedule of meetings with governors; stakeholders and the Executive Leadership Team
- confirmation that all questionnaires had been completed and interviews scheduled

Minute No.

- confirmation that the External Governance Reviewer would be attending meetings of the next round of committees via Teams and the Board of the Corporation meeting taking place on 19 July 2023 in person.

The CS indicated that the draft report would be made available over the summer with a view to delivering the final report to a single item agenda meeting on 20 September 2023.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A question was asked by a member as to whether similar exercises were being applied to the school's sector.

It was suggested that a similar approach was being adopted within the school's sector although it was believed that it was not mandatory with only a strong preference that it takes place.

- A further question was asked around the questionnaire and it was asked whether it was a general questionnaire or aligned specifically to the Group.

The CS referenced the initial scope issued by the Board of the Corporation to which it was considered the questions were aligned accordingly.

There were no further questions or comments raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the External Review of Governance progress update be received and noted.

COR/53/23**Draft Fees Policy 2023-2024**

The CFO presented a report which provided the Board with details of the Draft Fees Policy for the Academic Year 2023/2024 which had been recommended by the Resources Committee for approval.

There were no questions or comments raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Resources Committee recommendation in respect of the Fees Policy 2023/2024 be duly approved and implemented.

Action: Chief Finance Officer

COR/54/22**Draft Supply Chain and Fees Charges Policy 2023-2024**

The CFO presented a report which provided the Board with details of the Draft Supply Chain and Fees Charges Policy for the Academic Year 2023/2024 which had been recommended by the Resources Committee for approval.

There were no questions or comments raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that Resources Committee recommendation in respect of the Supply Chain and Fees Charges Policy 2023/2024 be duly approved and implemented.

Action: Chief Finance Officer

Minute No.**COR/55/22 Any Other Business**

The Chair of the Board of the Corporation, with members, took the opportunity to mark the occasion of the impending retirement of John Pitt (Lecturer Hospitality) with a presentation.

Members recorded their thanks to JP, and the department's staff and students, for the hospitality afforded to the Board of the Corporation over an extended number of years and wished JP well for the future.

There were no further items of business raised by members.

COR/56/22 Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Board of the Corporation would be held on Wednesday 19 July 2023 in the Boardroom at the Altrincham Campus.

Action: Corporation Secretary

The meeting closed at 19.32pm.

The Director of Marketing and External Relations left the meeting at 17.52pm following consideration of agenda item 2b.