

## TRAFFORD &amp; STOCKPORT COLLEGE GROUP

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of the Corporation  
held on Wednesday 11 December 2024 at 3.00pm in the Boardroom at the Altrincham Campus**

<b>Present:</b>	Graham Luccock	(Chairperson)
	James Scott	(Principal and Chief Executive Officer)
	Charlotte Barratt	
	Jill Bottomley	
	Olivia Bussey	
	Sarah Drake	
	Jed Hassid	
	Alison Hewitt	
	Heather Lang	
	*Emily McIntosh	
	Michelle McLaughlin	(Staff Governor)
	Jonathan O'Brien	
	Lewis Ormston	
	*Marcia Reynolds	
	Louise Richardson	
	Aisha Shabbir	(Student Governor)
	Blerta Shira	(Student Governor)
	Jeremy Woodside	
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Rebecca Clare	(Corporation Secretary)
	Carmen Gonzalez-Eslava	(Deputy Principal)
	Henry Taylor-Toone	(Chief Finance Officer)
	Michelle Leslie	(Vice Principal Corporate Services and Planning)
	Yvonne Riley	(Assistant Corporation Secretary)
	*Karen Rae	(Armstrong Watson – Financial Statements and Regularity Auditor)

\*attendance at the meeting via Microsoft Teams

**Minute No.****COR/107/24      Apologies for Absence**

The Corporation Secretary (CS) reported that there were no apologies for absence.

The Chair welcomed the Financial Statements and Regularity Auditor (FSRA), Armstrong Watson to the meeting. It was noted that FRSA would be in attendance during consideration of the items relating to the financial statements and the Governance Management Report.

**COR/108/24      Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of direct or indirect interests in any of the business items.

**COR/109/24      Minutes of the Board of the Corporation Meeting held on 2 October 2024**

**Minute No.**

**There were no issues raised by members and it was resolved that the minutes of the meeting be approved and accepted as a correct account.**

**COR/110/24****Matters Arising from the Minutes**

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

Most actions were noted as closed.

The CS confirmed that in relation to action COR/50/24 the launch event of the new Strategic Plan was scheduled to take place in January with an event for Stockport and an event for Trafford. The Corporation Secretary confirmed that details have been shared with all governors and she had received a positive response.

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

**COR/111/24****Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2023-2024**

The CS referred members to the previously circulated Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2023-2024 and provided an overview of the key aspects of the report.

There was confirmation that the report had been considered in detail by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 18 November 2024. The Chairperson of the Committee further confirmed that the Committee was satisfied the report presented an accurate record of the work undertaken by Audit Committee during the 2023-2024 academic year.

The CS stated that it was a requirement of the Post 16 Audit Code of Practice that the Audit Committee produce an annual report for the corporation, summarising the Committee's activities relating to the financial year under review, including:

- A summary of the work undertaken by the Committee during the year.
- The number of meetings held in the year and the attendance records for each audit Committee member.
- Any significant issues arising up to the date of the preparation of the report.
- Any significant matters of internal control included in the reports of audit and assurance providers.
- The Committee's opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Board of the Corporation's audit arrangements, assurance over subcontracting, framework of governance, risk management and control process, and its processes for the efficient and effective use of resources, solvency, and the safeguarding of assets.
- The date of the appointment of the external auditor and the remaining terms of the contract.
- The Committees view of its own effectiveness and how it has fulfilled its terms of reference (conclusion).
- Submit the Annual Report to the Board of the Corporation before the Statement of Corporate Governance and internal control in the annual accounts is signed.

**Minute No.**

It was noted that additional information had been added in this year's report to outline the arrangements that the Committee has in place to ensure the appropriate skills set, training and updating for members.

The CS commended the Annual Report to the Board of the Corporation stating that based upon the matters reported and considered by the Committee, to the best of its ability, the Committee had concluded that 'the adequacy and effectiveness of the Board of the Corporation's audit arrangements, assurance over subcontracting, framework of governance, risk management and control process, its processes for efficient and effective use of resources, solvency and the safeguarding of assets, and the financial statements and regularity audits, could be relied upon by the Board of the Corporation'.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

**There were no questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was unanimously resolved that the Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2023-2024 be accepted and approved.**

**Action: Chair of the Audit Committee/Corporation Secretary  
The report to be signed by the Chair of the Audit Committee.**

**COR/112/24****Self-Assessment of Compliance with Regularity and Propriety Requirements 2023-2024**

The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) referred members to the previously circulated report in relation to the Self-Assessment of Compliance with Regularity and Propriety requirements (SACRP) for the period 2023-2024. There was confirmation that the report included a copy of the completed Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire.

The CFO stated that it was a requirement of the Post 16 Audit Code of Practice that the completed Self-Assessment Questionnaire be signed by the Chair and Accounting Officer (PCEO).

There was confirmation that the questionnaire summarised key considerations in respect of the statement on regularity and compliance. Reference was further made to the new areas of the self-assessment relating to legal which the Corporation Secretary had completed.

The CFO advised that the auditors, following testing, had not raised any issues arising from the SACRP and that a clear regularity statement had been declared which was included in the Group's DRFS.

It was confirmed that the SACRP had been considered in detail by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 18 November 2024 and that it was commended to the Board of the Corporation for approval.

Comments and questions were invited.

**Minute No.****Action: Chief Finance Officer/Principal and CEO/Chair of the Corporation**

There were no questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration and deliberation it was unanimously resolved that the Self-Assessment of Compliance with Regularity and Propriety Requirements for 2023-2024 be approved and the Chair and Principal and CEO be authorised to sign the documents accordingly.

**COR/113/24      Report and Financial Statements including Letters of Representation, for the period ending 31 July 2024**

The CFO referred members to the previously circulated Draft Report and Financial Statements (DRFS) and Letter of Representation (LR) for the period ending 31 July 2024. There was confirmation that the report also included information in relation to the assessment of Going Concern.

There was confirmation that the Group was obliged to prepare the DRFS by 31 July each year. It was stated that the DRFS was subject to external audit and that the Regularity Self-Assessment (RSA) was subject to assurance engagement. Members were reminded that both documents were required to be submitted to the ESFA for review by 31 December 2024.

There was confirmation that the Resources Committee and the Audit Committee had given detailed consideration, to the Report and Financial Statements as well as the letter of representation and commended them to the Board of the Corporation for approval.

Narrative provided by the CFO in relation to the DRFS included the following:

- Reconciliation of P12 Management Accounts to Statutory Accounts.
- Only 1 adjustment impacting results - £78k adjustment of OfS recurrent grant (CR Income DR Grant Liability) – improving net profit, however no impact on Financial Health or Covenants.

**Minute No.**

- Most adjustments are re-classification between the Management Accounts and the Statutory Accounts. Overall comprehensive income improved by £78k.
- As no impact on underlying Ed. EBITDA Financial Health still in line to be Outstanding.

In relation to the Going Concern, the CFO reported that, at the date of signing the FY23/24 financial statements the assessment shows that the Group will be able to continue to operate for a period of no less than 12 months from the date of signing and is therefore a Going Concern.

There was confirmation that subject to the approval of the Report and Financial Statements the Chair and PCEO would be asked to sign the documentation accordingly.

**Action: Chief Finance Officer/Principal and CEO/Chair of the Corporation**

**There were no questions or comments from members and following due consideration and deliberation it was unanimously resolved that the Report and Financial Statements including the Letter of Representations for the period ending 31 July 2024 be approved and signed by the Chair and the Principal and Chief Executive Officer.**

**COR/114/24**

**Final Governance and Management Report for the period ending 31 July 2024**

The FSRA presented a copy of the Final Management and Governance Report (FMGR) for the year ending 31 July 2024.

The FSRA commented that the audit had progressed well and had encountered no significant difficulties. The FSRA confirmed that there were very few adjustments and thanked the team for their organisation and efficiency during the audit.

Members were referred to the previously circulated FMGR from which the following was highlighted:

- Income generation remains quite challenging across the sector.
- R14 – in the final reconciliation there was one accepted difference that was reported as not material.
- Overview shared of management override of controls.
- Estimations and judgements and confirmation that there were no issues arising.
- Defined pension was still in a net position and representation on this line was confirmed as nil and not holding an asset value. It was confirmed that this remains as an asset value for most colleges.
- An overview of the audit risks was provided and a clean and unmodified opinion for both external audit and regularity confirmed.
- An update on procurement procedures was shared.
- It was confirmed that there were no issues to raise and noting a smooth audit process and consistency of the finance team.
- During the year there was a write off and this was reported to have gone through the appropriate procedures but was still ongoing at year end, as this had not been fully written off yet.
- There were no minimal adjustments and no material adjustments.
- The report reflected a fair view, and the balances were verified overall.

**Minute No.**

- The Audit Committee discussed the findings, and they were accepted by local management and appropriate actions taken and reported in the tracker within a reasonable timeframe going forward.
- Regularity section shared a clean unmodified opinion overall and a good position.

The FRSA put forward three questions to the Board of the Corporation and received the following responses:

- Is there anything from a post-balance sheet event that should be disclosed within the financial statements? Not that the Board of the Corporation is aware of.
- Are all governors happy to sign off that the entity is a going concern with sufficient resources to meet liabilities? Yes.
- Is there anything from a legal perspective that could cause reputational damage to the college? Not that the Board of the Corporation is aware of.

Members thanked the FSRA for their attendance and presentation. The Chair further recorded thanks of the Board of the Corporation to the Finance Team.

**There were no further issues raised by members arising from the report and after due discussion and consideration it was resolved that the Final Management and Governance Report for year ending 31 July 2024 be approved.**

**COR/115/24****Chief Finance Officer's Report and Management Accounts for the 3 Months Ending 31 October 2024**

Members were referred to the previously circulated CFO Report and Management Accounts for the 3 months ending 31 October 2024.

It was confirmed that the following was attached to the covering report:

- a copy of the CFO's presentation
- Period 3 Management Accounts
- Period 3 Management Accounts Supporting Schedules.
- the Management Accounts Period 3 Dashboard

The CFO made a presentation in relation to the key issues from his report and the management accounts under the following headings:

- Underlying Ed. EBITDA
- Higher Education
- Risks and Opportunities
- FY2024/2025 Forecast
- Cash
- FY2025/2026 Outlook

**Underlying Ed. EBITDA**

The following was highlighted:

- T-Level – in year clawback due to under recruitment
- Subcontracting – lower fees due to under recruitment by 16-19 subcontractors and Code Nation
- Xyrius – short term additional GMCA adult contract
- Higher Education – shortfall in recruitment

**Minute No.**

- Employer's NI – following October Budget (full year c.£700k)
- Financial risks and opportunities were shared, including the potential benefit from high needs funding and the impact of the teachers' pay award

A member questioned the role of Learning Facilitators (LFs), and the CFO confirmed that LFs provide support for High Need students.

**Higher Education**

The following was highlighted:

- A large level of under recruitment leading to a tangible impact on underlying Ed. EBITDA.
- Need to consider net income (after subcontracting fees) to show real picture.
- After release of risk reserve still showing a net shortfall of £139k.
- Possibility of an increased January cohort.
- The CFO addressed the challenges in higher education recruitment, emphasising the need for strategic decisions on which HE courses to back and the importance of marketing. The CFO also discussed the impact of universities on FE recruitment and the need to review subcontracting.

**Risks and Opportunities**

The following was highlighted:

- HE and T-Levels – risks crystallised.
- ASF – still on track to deliver 104% of GMCA allocation + additional Skills Fund
- FE- Tuition – YTD slightly behind, to monitor.
- LFs – additional £500k funding to be spend on LFs so reducing risk of overspend.
- Pay – Vacancy factor running at 1.9% versus Budget assumption 4%.
- NI – additional funding announced but yet to see details.
- GMCA L3 Skills Fund – applied for additional funding.
- Non-pay – Estates and Exams tracking over budget, offset at this stage by lower Gas and Electricity and other admin costs.

**FY2024/2025 Forecast**

The following was highlighted:

- Changes in risk reserve offsetting shortfall in Underlying Ed. EBITDA.
- Still forecasting to be passing all our Financial KPIs with Outstanding Financial Health (due to improved Current Ratio) and all covenants passing with significant headroom.

**Cash**

The CFO confirmed that cash is still in a strong position.

**FY2025/2026 Outlook**

The following was highlighted:

- £2.8m hit to Ed. EBITDA as a result of 16-19 under recruitment and Employer's NI.
- Challenge is how to mitigate this to ensure we keep £3.6m Ed. EBITDA.
- Our 3-year plan did not assume any underlying funding increases, but we are expecting something for FY25/26.
- Work underway to plan for FY25/26 – class sizes, curriculum plan, additional income opportunities.
- Board to be kept updated on progress throughout the year.

**Minute No.**

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

- a) the Chief Finance Officer's Report and presentation be received and noted; and**
- b) the Management Accounts for the period to 31 October 2024 be duly approved**

**COR/116/24****Board Assurance and Risk Management Update – December 2024**

The CFO referred members to the previously circulated report and the Board Assurance and Risk Management Framework (BARMF) update. There was confirmation of the Audit Committee's role in monitoring the BARMF throughout the year to satisfy itself that risks were being actively managed, with the appropriate controls in place and that they were working effectively.

There was confirmation that the BARMF had been considered in detail by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 18 November 2024.

A summary of the risks as detailed in the Strategic Risk Register were as follows:

- that there were 29 total risks of which 24 had a gross score over 15 and were therefore monitored by the Audit Committee, and of the risks there were 4 with a net risk over 15.

There was confirmation of the recommendation to remove a risk relating to the managing the post-merger impact of Cheadle and Marple Sixth Form College (CAMSFC) as it was now considered part of the business-as-usual cultural risk.

The CFO provided a summary of increased risks:

- Subcontracting partnerships.
- Reduction of income due to under-recruitment of 16 to 19-year-olds.
- Financial sustainability is tied to income reduction.
- Realising the benefits of capital projects, particularly Cheadle, which is on track but still in progress.

The CFO provided a summary of decreased risks:

- Quality of apprenticeships due to improved achievement rates and reduced DLocks.
- Recruitment and retention of staff due to a successful summer campaign.
- Maximising apprenticeship income with the new online enrolment system reducing.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

A member questioned whether there was an individual risk in relation to AI. The CFO reported that there was a generic AI risk linked to the risk of not benefiting from the use of AI but also a risk with using it.

**There were no further questions or issues raised by members arising from the report and it was resolved that the Board Assurance Risk Management Framework update be received and noted with the removal of one risk relating to the merger of CAMSFC approved.**



**Minute No.****COR/117/24 ESFA College Financial Forecasting Return 2024-2026 Letter**

The CFO referred members to the ESFA College Financial Forecasting Return 2024-2026 letter and information in relation to the ongoing management of the Group's financial health. The CFO confirmed that the letter summarised the ESFA's view of the Group in terms of its financial health for the current and following academic year. It was noted that the 3 key criteria related to solvency, profitability and borrowings/affordability of any debt. The CFO reported that the financial health score for 2023-2024 had been classified by the ESFA as 'Good' and further that, based on the budgetary information for 2024-2025, as also being 'Good'. The CFO confirmed that the financial dashboard information reflects the Group's CFFR submission.

There were no questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the ESFA Financial College Financial Forecasting Return 2024-2026 letter be received and noted.

**COR/118/24 Higher Education Self Evaluation Documentation 2023/2024 and Quality Improvement Plan 2024/2025**

The Deputy Principal (DP) referred members to the previously circulated report and information in relation to the self-evaluation of Higher Education (HE) provision for the academic year 2023-2024 and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2024-2025.

It was stated that the HE Self Evaluation Document (SED) was equivalent to the FE Self Evaluation Document (SAR) and had been considered in detail by the HE Curriculum & Quality Committee.

Key issues highlighted included:

- The QIP 2023/2024 had 8 areas for improvement (Afl) with 44 actions, of which 73% were completed, 25% partially completed and 2% not completed (RAG rated Red).
- Enrolments in 2023/2024 fell by 5.6% compared to the previous year.
- Retention as of 1 November fell by 4.9 percentage points to 87.6%.
- In-year retention and achievement were stronger than the previous year at 97% and 96.3% respectively.
- The level of attainment was higher than in 2022/2023, with almost one-third of students securing first-class honours or distinction.
- The profile of the student population remains broadly in line with that in 2022/2023. Notably, of those that enrolled, almost 69% were mature students, 81% white, 43% in IMD quintiles 1 and 2 and 25% declared a learning difficulty or disability.

The DP advised that analysis of the strengths and areas for improvement, supported by evidence as presented in the Self Evaluation Document (SED), had informed the Quality Improvement Plan 2024/2025. It was confirmed that there are 7 areas for improvement, broader in scope than those in 2023/2024 and with 44 actions.

The DP outlined the 7 areas for improvement, which included:

**Minute No.**

1. Curriculum offer, course design, and delivery
2. Outcomes for students
3. Student engagement and representation
4. Evidence of widening access and participation
5. Engaging and meeting the needs of every learner
6. Assurance of quality standards and processes
7. Human resourcing of HE provision

There was confirmation that progress reports and updates would be presented to each meeting of the HE Curriculum and Quality Committee with the aspiration of delivering sustained quality performance and growth.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

A member questioned whether the HE Curriculum was linked to the Employer Advisory Board to raise awareness of HE. The DP confirmed that this was an action in the QIP and related to improving engagement links to industry. The DP reported that a brief document had been created that shared the provision at subject level. The document is shared with employers to provide information on different curriculum areas and marketing tools are used to encourage upskilling in different areas.

A member questioned whether there was a measurement for the number of employers engaged. The PCEO confirmed that the Employer Responsive Strategy will be shared at the Strategic Planning Day in March. However, there was an increase in apprenticeships at higher level, rather than HE programmes. A member questioned whether any local employers could offer sponsorship.

A member questioned if the changes to awarding body powers would have implications for the Group. The DP confirmed that this would have no impact on the Group and was on hold until August 2025.

**There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Higher Education Self Evaluation Report 2023-2024, Quality Improvement Plan Outcomes 2023-2024 and Quality Improvement Plan 2024-2025 be approved and implemented.**

**COR/119/24**

**Further Education Self-Assessment Report 2023/2024 and Quality Improvement Plan 2023/2024, Quality Improvement Plan and Performance Indicators 2024/2025**

The Deputy Principal (DP) referred members to the previously circulated report and information in relation to the Further Education Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2023-2024 and Quality Improvement Plan and Key Performance Indicators 2024-2025.

There was confirmation that the documents had been considered at length by the FE Curriculum and Quality Committee and had further been validated by the Governor Validation Panel.

The DP provided an outline of the 8 key objectives/areas for improvement (Afl) and highlighted the following:

**Minute No.**

- The overall assessment of 'Good' for the SAR 2023-2024 with 'Good' for Overall Effectiveness; all aspects are now self-assessed as "Good", including apprenticeships, and our contribution to "Meeting Skills Needs" has improved from "Reasonable" to "Strong" in the last 12 months.
- Student outcomes for young people, adults and apprentices have remained high or increased due to our relentless focus on in-year progress through effective teaching and learning and supporting the individual needs of students.
- The challenge to attain 'Outstanding' for Personal Development, an area that it was considered the Group excelled in.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

**Action: Deputy Principal**

The PCEO confirmed that the FE Provider Dashboard will be shared at the next meeting, and this will include measures in relation to how we meet skills needs. The PCEO confirmed there was a section in the dashboard that related to destinations and the proportion of provision that meets the six sector priorities. The PCEO confirmed that the new Ofsted judgements had been leaked by the Financial Times and there were 10 measures that were non-controversial. Consultation will commence in early 2025.

A member questioned the date in the action plan for the Teaching and Learning Strategy of July 2026 and whether this was too long. The DP confirmed that this was a milestone, but the strategy is being developed now and impact will be continually measured during the period up to July 2026.

**There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Further Education Self-Assessment Report 2023/2024 and Quality Improvement Plan 2023/2024, Quality Improvement Plan and Performance Indicators 2024/2025 be approved and implemented.**

**COR/120/24****Key Performance Indicators Update Report – Term 1 2024-2025 Update**

The PCEO provided an update in relation to the Term 1 Key Performance Indicators for 2024-2025.

Members were referred to the Executive Summary and RAG rated supporting information in relation to the Term 1 position against the Group's KPIs.

The PCEO shared the following key points:

**Headline Measures**

- Overall learner numbers are currently down against target due to shortfalls in 16-19 and HE. The current figure is also impacted upon by adult learner numbers which continue to recruit throughout the year.
- It should be noted the Organisational Culture Measure (TPI Blueprint Score) is still based on the original culture survey from FY22 and will be re-issued in readiness for FY26.

**Minute No.****Strategic Priority 1**

- Apprenticeship forecast numbers are largely on track, but there is risk due to the on-going recruitment throughout the year, hence these measures are rated as amber.
- FT Higher Education numbers are below target. This issue was considered in detail at the HE C&Q Committee and the financial risk is being mitigated.
- 16-19 learner numbers (incl. T Levels) are below target. This is a result of: changes to qualifications due to “pause and review” (meaning less T levels were offered by TSCG); capping numbers in areas such as Construction and Building Services (where demand significantly outstripped ability to supply); and failure to hit targets by some margin in the areas of Academic, Creative Arts and Sport.

**Strategic Priority 2**

- It is proposed that the Staff Utilisation target is raised to 90% (from 85%) in FY25 with a target by FY30 of 95%. This would bring us into line with the latest sector benchmarks released by ESFA.

**Strategic Priority 3**

- Attendance continues to be a key priority. Although improved on FY24, raising standards in student attendance is challenging.
- It is proposed to change the High Needs Achievement target to 86% (from 84%) due to last year's improved position.

**Strategic Priority 4**

- Financial targets are all on track. However, the failure to achieve 16-19 learner number targets will provide significant challenge to the FY26 budget assumptions. The Executive is already drawing up clear plans to mitigate the impact on next year's financial position.

**Strategic Priority 5**

- Average class size is slightly below target. We will be undertaking focused work on improving curriculum efficiency, which will include this measure.
- The overall performance score of our PCs and laptops can now be measured accurately using Endpoint Analytics in our Microsoft platform. Our overall score is 74% but is being held back by a significant number of older devices at Cheadle and Marple, as well as some low power laptop devices that remain in circulation which were received from the DfE over lockdown. Continued capital investment in our IT devices, enabling us to retire our older devices, will result in the score increasing, giving staff and students a better digital experience overall. Whilst not on target to meet this year's KPI figure it still compares favourably to the median "All Organisations" score of 50 on the Microsoft platform.

**Strategic Priority 6**

- Tailored learning numbers (previously known as community learning) are below target but do continue to recruit throughout the year.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

A member questioned the demographic bulge and when this starts to decline. The PCEO confirmed that the decline is expected after 2030. The PCEO confirmed

**Minute No.**

the need to adjust space to accommodate demand for construction courses for next September. The PCEO informed the Board of the Corporation that the Group will start recruiting staff for electrical instillation as soon as possible in January 2025.

A member questioned the qualifications that will be on offer next September. The PCEO confirmed that the outcome of the pause and review has not been announced yet. A member questioned whether the timings would work for curriculum planning. The PCEO confirmed that an announcement is expected imminently, and the team will plan around this.

A member questioned the plan for T Levels given the recruitment challenges. The PCEO confirmed the challenges and strategic decisions relating to T levels, including the impact of the government's pause and review on qualifications. The PCEO emphasised the need for clear communication with parents and schools and the importance of addressing space and staffing issues. There was consideration in relation to the right approach and not relying on large numbers. The Board discussed the social justice issues around marketing, budget, consistency and staffing costs. The DP confirmed that there are still issues in securing the work placements for T Level students.

A member questioned the red RAG rating for the number of PCs and laptops. The PCEO confirmed that this was due to figure being 1% below baseline. The PCEO confirmed that if the figure is more than 5%, then it becomes material. A member questioned whether this would have an impact on teaching and learning. The PCEO confirmed that this will not have an impact on teaching and learning and was moving in a positive direction.

The PCEO reported changes to the figures for staff utilisation and high needs targets. The staff utilisation figure will be changed to match sector benchmark data released by the ESFA. The high needs achievement figure was due to the Group achieving better outcomes last year.

**There were no questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Key Performance indicators Report Term 1 2024-2025 be received and noted.**

**COR/121/24****Minutes of the Search Committee held on 28 October 2024**

The minutes of the Search Committee held on 28 October 2024 were received and noted.

**COR/122/24****Matters Arising from the Minutes**

The Chairperson of the Committee presented a brief overview of the business items considered by the Committee at its meeting and the following items were recommended for approval:

- Extension to term of office: The committee recommended extending the terms of office for current members (AH and HL) for the period 2024/2028 recognising their valuable contributions and skillsets.

**Minute No.**

- Co-opted member Audit Committee: The committee recommended the application to appoint JW as a co-opted member of the Audit Committee for a term of office, from 2024 until 2028.
- Governor Appointment Panel Recommendations:
  - Catherine Thomas: Board member serving on the Audit Committee
  - Shuan Parker: Board member serving on the Audit Committee
  - Nick Wroe: Board member serving on the Resources Committee
  - James Cash: Co-opted member FE Curriculum & Quality Committee

**There were no further questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the items be approved.**

A further update was provided by the Chair of the Committee as follows:

- Election of Chair and Vice Chair: Graham Luccock and Louise Richardson were re-elected as Chair and Vice Chair of the Search Committee for the 2024/2026.
- Board Membership Profile: The committee reviewed the Board Membership Profile, outcomes from the Skills Audit and training needs, the Ethnicity, Gender and Disability profile and the Skills, Knowledge and Experience register. Terms of office, committee membership and annual attendance were also considered. The items supported the Governance SAR process.
- Governor Recruitment: The Corporation Secretary reported a successful recruitment campaign and the focus on focusing on filling skills gaps and supporting local and regional needs. It was noted that a number of the candidates were ex-students and supported and fulfilled the Governance External Review recommendation. The committee discussed the status of vacant positions and reviewed applications from potential candidates.
- Training and Development Report: The committee reviewed the annual governance training report, noting high levels of engagement with both internal and external training events, and the successful use of the iHASCO platform for mandatory training.

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

**COR/123/24      Minutes of the Resources Committee Meetings held on 14 November 2024**

The minutes of the Resources Committee held on 14 November 2024 were received and noted.

**COR/124/24      Matters Arising from the Minutes**

The Vice Chairperson of the Committee presented a brief overview of the business items considered by the Committee at its meeting and the following items were recommended for approval:

- The Management Accounts for the 2 months ending 30 September were considered and recommended to the Board for approval by the Resources Committee at its meeting on 14 November 2024
- ESFA Financial Forecasting Return 2024-2026 including Financial Dashboard Summary
- Information Security Policy
- Acceptable Staff Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

**Minute No.**

The following items were considered by the Resources and Audit Committee and are items on the Board of the Corporation agenda for approval:

Report and Financial Statements including Letters of Representation, for the period ending 31 July 2024

- Appendix 1 – Annual Report and Financial Statements Year ended 31 July 2024
- Appendix 2 – Letter of Representation
- Appendix 3 – Letter of Representation Regularity

There were no further questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the items be approved.

A further update was provided by the Chair of the Committee as follows:

- Election of Chair and Vice Chair: Louise Richardson was unanimously re-elected as Chair, and Alison Hewitt as Vice Chair, for the Resources Committee for the academic years 2024/2026.
- People and Culture Annual Plan: The Director of Human Resources and Performance provided updates on the People and Culture Annual Plan, highlighting progress in organisational culture, talent attraction, and employee development, including a staff survey with a 71% response rate.
- Funding Claims and Contract Values: The Assistant Principal Planning, Funding and Performance reported on the final funding claims for 2023/2024 and contract values for 2024/2025, noting increases in 16-19 and T-Level funding, but some expected clawbacks.
- Partner Subcontracting Update: Updates on subcontracting activities included the final year of delivery with Flixton Girls' School.
- Learner Numbers and Funding: Current learner numbers and predicted funding were discussed, with a focus on addressing shortfalls in 16-19 and T-Level enrolments.
- Annual Report and Financial Statements: The Chief Finance Officer presented the draft annual report and financial statements for the year ending 31 July 2024, noting a £78k adjustment.
- Management Accounts: The CFO discussed the management accounts for the two months ending 30 September 2024, highlighting a year-to-date Ed. EBITDA ahead of budget and the need for increased recruitment to meet financial targets.
- Capital Funding and Procurement: Updates were provided on various capital funding projects and the procurement strategy, with a delay in the Procurement Act affecting the action plan for 2024/2025. The action plan will be shared upon release of the new legislation.

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

**COR/125/24**

**Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting held on 18 November 2024**

The minutes of the Audit Committee held on 18 November 2024 were received and noted.

**COR/126/24**

**Matters Arising from the Minutes**

**Minute No.**

The Chairperson of the Committee presented a brief overview of the business items considered by the Committee at its meeting and the following items were recommended for approval:

- Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2023/2024
- Self-Assessment of Compliance with Regularity and Propriety Requirements 2023/2024
- Report and Financial Statements including Letters of Representation, for the period ending 31 July 2024 - Appendix 1 – Annual Report and Financial Statements Year ended 31 July 2024 - Appendix 2 – Letter of Representation - Appendix 3 – Letter of Representation Regularity
- Final Governance and Management Report for the period ending 31 July 2024
- Chief Finance Officers Report and Management Accounts for Period for 3 months ending 31 October 2024, noting that the Management Accounts for the 2 months ending 30 September were considered and recommended to the Board for approval by the Resources Committee at its meeting on 14 November 2024
- Board Assurance and Risk Management Update
- ESFA Financial Forecasting Return 2024-2026, including Financial Dashboard Summary
- Data Protection Annual Report 2023/2024
- Internal Audit Report as follows:
  - Business Critical Controls - Health & Safety
  - OfS HE Data Audit 2023/2024
  - Draft Internal Audit Annual Report 2023/2024
  - Board Assurance and Risk Management Policy

There were no further questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the items be approved.

A further update was provided by the Chair of the Committee as follows:

- Election of Committee Chairs: Heather Lang was elected as the new Chair of the Audit Committee for the academic years 2024/2026, the election of the Vice Chair was deferred until the Spring Term Audit Committee meeting. Jed Hassid was thanked for his commitment throughout his tenure.
- Internal Audit Reports: The committee reviewed internal audit reports on Business-Critical Controls - Health & Safety and the OfS HE Data Audit for 2023/2024. Recommendations were made to improve record-keeping, oversight, and data accuracy. The issues relating to Health and Safety will continue to be monitored. The IA reiterated that the second line of defence needs to be strengthened.
- Internal Audit Annual Report: The Internal Audit Annual Report for 2023/2024 was presented, providing a summary of the audit work undertaken and confirming a reasonable level of assurance for the Group's governance, risk management, and internal control frameworks.
- Data Protection Incidents: There were two notable incidents discussed: An external person was given information after claiming to be a student. A staff member's email was hacked, though no data was confirmed to be taken. The committee emphasised the need to keep these incidents under review and ensure robust measures are in place to prevent future occurrences.
- Final Management and Governance Report: The Financial Statements and Regularity Auditors presented their Final Management and Governance



**Minute No.**

Report for the year ending July 31, 2024, highlighting a smooth audit process and a strong cash position for the Group.

- Board Assurance and Risk Management Framework: The CFO presented an update on the Board Assurance and Risk Management Framework, recommending the removal of a risk related to the post-merger impact of Cheadle and Marple Sixth Form College.
- A Reserves Policy will be developed and shared with the Audit Committee during the next year.

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

**COR/127/24      Minutes of the FE Curriculum and Quality Committee held on 20 November 2024**

The minutes of the FE Curriculum and Quality Committee held on 20 November 2024 were received and noted.

**COR/128/24      Matters Arising from the Minutes**

The Chairperson of the Committee presented a brief overview of the business items considered by the Committee at its meeting and the following was highlighted:

- Election of Chair and Vice Chair: Sarah Drake was re-elected as Chair, and Olivia Bussey was re-elected as Vice Chair for the 2024/2026 academic years.
- Student Outcomes Report: The Deputy Principal presented the Student Outcomes Report for 2023/2024, highlighting improvements in Maths outcomes, overall student satisfaction, and the promotion of bursaries to increase free school meal uptake.
- English and Mathematics Benchmarked Results: The Assistant Principal Study Programmes – Academic discussed benchmark data for 16-19 GCSE English and Maths, noting significant improvements in Maths outcomes and the need for targeted support for specific student groups.
- Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan: The Deputy Principal presented the draft Self-Assessment Report for 2023/2024, the Quality Improvement Plan for 2024/2025, and the Performance Indicators Report for 2024/2025, which included eight key objectives for improvement. Noting the overall grade of 'good' and Skills Needs assessed as 'strong' (approved under earlier item).
- Quality of Education Update: The Assistant Principal Quality and Student Experience provided an update on the quality of education, highlighting new procedures for quality assurance, examples of One Practice Change, continuous professional development, and the identification of at-risk courses.
- Student Governor Report: Student Governors/Deputy Governors presented their report, discussing their activities, student experiences, and areas needing improvement, such as timetable issues and better library hours.
- Personal and Professional Development: The Personal and Professional Development team launched new initiatives to enhance student skills and engagement, including the Student Alliance, enrolment interviews, and youth social action plans.

**Minute No.**

- Student Support Report: The Interim Assistant Principal Student Support, Safeguarding and Inclusion reported on increased safeguarding referrals, a rise in EHCP students, and new provisions for at-risk students.
- To note the following strategies will be presented at the Governor Strategic Development Day to be held on 5 March 2024:
  - Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy
  - Student Experience Strategy

The following items were recommended for approval by the Chair of the FE Curriculum and Quality Committee and subsequently reviewed and approved by the Board of the Corporation:

- FE Curriculum and Quality Terms of Reference
- Careers Education and IAG Policy

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

**COR/129/24      Minutes of the HE Curriculum and Quality Committee held on 28 November 2024**

The minutes of the HE Curriculum and Quality Committee held on 28 November 2024 were received and noted.

**COR/130/24      Matters Arising from the Minutes**

The Chairperson of the Committee presented a brief overview of the business items considered by the Committee at its meeting and the following was highlighted:

- Election of Chair and Vice Chair: Emily McIntosh was unanimously re-elected as Chair, and Graham Luccock as Vice Chair, for the HE Curriculum & Quality for the academic years 2024/2026.
- Election of Student Representative: Cameron Sewell has been elected as the new HE Student Representative.
- Internal Audit Report – HE Student Data: Update on further internal audit commissioned in August 2024 to review student data for 2023/2024 and report on the level of compliance, following up on the recommendations raised in the OfS 2019/2020 report and the subsequent ILR HE data audit 2022/2023. Audit completed as planned with decreased error rates. All errors were corrected, and clean data was submitted to OfS for 2023/2024. An email from OfS on 10 October confirmed satisfaction with the audit recommendations and no further information is needed. Action plan 2024/2025 agreed with further internal audit commissioned to take place prior to the end of the academic year to ensure data accuracy and compliance. Audit Committee and HE Curriculum & Quality Committee to continue to receive regular updates.
- Draft Higher Skills Strategy 2024/2030: The initial draft of the Higher Skills Strategy was presented, outlining strategic objectives and next steps to be presented at the Governors' Strategic Development Day for final consideration and approval.
- The HE Performance Update 2024/2025: Committee considered the recruitment shortfall and measures to address the shortfall and strengthen

**Minute No.**

retention efforts. Currently £369,000 adrift from target. Risk contingency built into budget of £350,000.

- The APAHES provided information on the Annual Self-Evaluation Document (SED), outcomes of the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2023-2024, and the QIP 2024/2025 (approved under earlier item on the agenda).
- The key operational risks were confirmed to be:
  - Financial Risk against 2024/2025 income position
  - Delivery of successful student outcomes in line with B3 conditions
  - Compliance with Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance around public information for HE
- Student Engagement: The impact of student engagement activities and survey results were discussed.

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

**COR/131/24****Key issues of the Safeguarding Committee Meeting held on 15 October 2024**

The key issues of the Safeguarding Committee meeting held on 15 October 2024 were received and noted.

The Link Governor for this area shared the following key points:

- Low-Level Concerns: an update was provided on the low-level concerns procedure, mentioning the involvement of trade unions in drafting a revised procedure.
- Quality Cycle: the quality cycle was shared involving various departments and emphasised the need for everyone to review and ensure satisfaction with the quality measures.
- IT Hardware for Cheadle and Marple: There was a brief update on plans to upgrade the IT infrastructure at Cheadle campus, including a new Wi-Fi solution.
- Local, National, Regional Safeguarding Prevent Concerns: Updates were provided on several key issues, including domestic violence and abuse, emotionally based school attendance, and mental health needs. Workshops and support sessions are being organised to address these concerns.
- Substance Abuse Education: Efforts are being made to tackle substance misuse among young people, with local services like Mosaic actively involved in providing support and education.
- Student Well-being and Happiness: The Student Alliance initiative aims to enhance student well-being by promoting extracurricular activities and mental health support. A sense-check survey on student well-being is planned for mid-November.
- Self-Initiated Terrorism: Concerns about self-initiated terrorism in the Northwest were discussed, with a focus on Islamist extremism and extreme right-wing activities.
- AoC Safer Students Conference: The conference highlighted the collaboration between the Department for Education and the Home Office to reduce violence towards young girls and women. A survey on suicide among young people is set to launch in January.
- Data Overview: There has been a 33% reduction in safeguarding referrals since the start of the new academic year. The top issues identified include mental

**Minute No.**

health risk, suicide, self-harm, peer-on-peer bullying, domestic abuse, and substance misuse.

- **Belong Project Update:** The project aims to improve understanding of relational attachment and trauma-informed practices. The first professional supervision session was attended by 83 staff members.
- **Staff Training and Compliance:** Issues related to staff compliance and workload management were noted. Efforts are being made to address these challenges.
- **Safeguarding Conference:** A safeguarding conference is scheduled for March 12, 2025, at the Aspire Restaurant – Altrincham Campus.

The Link Governor confirmed that she had recently attended the Safety Roadshows where attendees were talking very highly of the Group, particularly in relation to engagement with students.

The Board of the Corporation discussed the figures from the Bee Well Service in relation to the young persons quality of life survey and how this figure is reported to have declined nationally. A further discussion was held in relation to the high number of students vaping and the impact on wellbeing. The Link Governor reported there was a higher number of young people accessing the drink and drug service. The DP confirmed that young people use drink and drugs as a coping mechanism. A member questioned how we find out the number of young people who access the service. The DP confirmed that the Group exchanges information with the services and students also share information. The PCEO confirmed that the use of cannabis is increasing on a weekly basis, and this is being dealt with through the correct procedures.

**There were no questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the key issues, actions and matters arising be received and noted.**

**COR/132/24****Key issues of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Meeting held on 18 October 2024**

The key issues of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee meeting held on 18 October 2024 were received and noted.

The Link Governor for this area shared the following key points:

- **EDI Data Analysis:** the team will continue analysing the final EDI data for 16 to 18 funded students, focusing on identifying gaps and trends.
- **Draft EDI Annual Plan 24/25:** The committee focus on completing and submitting the annual plan with specific actions and targets, focusing on embedding EDI in the TSCG Strategic Plan and addressing performance gaps.
- **TSCG Calendar and Celebrations 24/25:** a special edition of the student newsletter was produced at the end of Black History Month.
- **Inclusion-Positive Promotion & Activities:** inclusion will be promoted through safety roadshows and partnerships with organisations like the Proud Trust and Stockport Race Equality Partnership.
- **EDI Organisational Development Priorities 24/25:** The HR team will collaborate with trade unions to encourage staff to disclose their protected characteristics data and share relevant documents with committee members.
- **Community Update:** To continue developing new community partnerships to promote health, well-being, and human rights awareness among students.

**Minute No.**

- Student Membership: New student representatives were welcomed and encouraged to participate actively.
- EDI Achievement Retention and Pass Data: the student data report focuses on addressing performance disparities among different ethnic groups and students from deprived areas.
- Consideration to how the Group creates a diverse succession pipeline for leadership and management roles.
- Figures for refugees and low participation.
- Issues nationally relating to unconscious bias.
- Female and to male performance increase.
- Explore data further to challenge any low expectations.

The DP confirmed that there is a focus on curriculum objectives to support the broader EDI experiences of students within the Group.

**Action: Assistant Corporation Secretary**

**The Chair of the Committee shared her Link Governor report with the Governance Team that day and this will be uploaded to Team Engine and shared with all governors through the Link Governor file.**

**There were no questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the key issues, actions and matters arising be received and noted.**

COR/133/24

**Governance Self-Assessment Report 2023/2024 – outcomes and draft Governance Improvement Plan 2024/2025 (including recommendations from the Governance External and AoC Code of Good Governance review)**

The Corporation Secretary explained that the SAR Validation Panel had carried out a thorough review and made a recommendation, to seek formal approval from the Board of the Corporation on the following:

- Governance Self-Assessment 2023-2024
- Governance Action Plan 2023-2024 (Quality Improvement Plan including actions arising from the External Governance Review and AoC Code of Good Governance)
- Draft Governance Action Plan 2024-2025

The Corporation Secretary summarised the main reports from the Governance Self-Assessment and Governance Action Plan 2023-2024 as follows:

- The AoC Code of Good Governance has been embedded into the Governance SAR 2023-2024.
- The new Strategic Plan 2024-30 was established. With the agreement of the Board of the Corporation, the Strategic Plan was approved during the Autumn term 2024.
- Operational Plan and Key Performance Indicators 2023/2024: The Board monitored progress through termly reports, and it was decided to replace the operational plan with an annual report measuring strategic priorities.
- Quality Improvement Plan: The Board of the Corporation and relevant Committees received progress reports at every meeting. Key areas for improvement included the development of English and maths skills across the Group and the quality of apprenticeship provision.

**Minute No.**

- Financial Performance and Stability: Key financial targets were set and monitored, with the end-of-year management accounts showing good financial health.
- New Senior Post Holders: Effective induction and integration of the Chief Finance Officer and Corporation Secretary.
- Estates and Capital Projects: Progress was made on strategic priorities, including the completion of car park facilities at Stockport College and the ongoing delivery of the Cheadle Project. The opening of the new Igloo Cave at Altrincham Campus, Green Technologies hub and launch of new Cyber Lab at Stockport Campus.
- Action Plans: All action plans were approved and implemented, with progress reports provided. With positive results noted on the staff survey.
- Local Accountability: The first Skills and Accountability Committee monitored delivery and oversight, with the Accountability Statement reviewed and adopted.
- Governance: The External Governance Review outcomes were implemented and monitored, a review was undertaken of all Governance Documentation, a new schedule of business was shared for 2024-2025, with improvements made to agenda setting to avoid duplication, a focus on succession planning and a decision made in relation to board size. Adoption and review of the AoC Code of Good Governance.

The Corporation Secretary provided the following update on the key areas in the Draft Governance Action Plan 2024-2025:

- To ensure effective monitoring and impact. Ensure a continued effective response to curriculum and quality improvement and to continue to deliver a high quality of education for all students.
- Review the new meeting structure at year-end to ensure greater participation and interaction with staff and students has been successful.
- Ensuring succession planning and integration/induction of newly appointed governors.
- Review of Link Governor scheme.
- Increase the use of AI and digital strategies to support the whole organisation including governors.
- To monitor and approved individual strategies to ensure delivery of TSCG Strategic Plan and the priorities to have a future skilled workforce and to be recognised as an 'anchor institution'.
- Oversee the implementation and completion of the Cheadle Project.
- Ensure the continued Financial Stability of the Group through setting and monitoring of key and achievable Financial Targets.
- Continue to support and monitor the effectiveness and development of the transformational change/ cultural change programme across the merged organisation to become an 'Employer of choice'.

**There were no questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Governance Self-Assessment 2023-2024, Governance Action Plan 2023-2024 (Quality Improvement Plan including actions arising from the External Governance Review and AoC Code of Good Governance) and Draft Governance Action Plan 2024-2025 be approved.**

**COR/134/24**

**Any Other Business**

**Minute No.**

The Chair of the Corporation explained that this was JH last meeting, and he had been a long serving and committed member of the Board of the Corporation, in addition to serving as the Chair of the Audit Committee. JH will be joining the Skills Accountability Committee as a Co-opted member.

The Chair of the Corporation also confirmed that this will be JW last Board of the Corporation meeting. JW will be joining the Audit Committee as a Co-opted member. The Chair thanked JW for his commitment and pragmatic approach during his period of office.

The Chair thanked the Board of the Corporation for their commitment during the last year and wished all in attendance at the meeting a wonderful festive break.

**COR/135/24****Date of the Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting will be held on 26 March 2025 at 10.00am.

The CS advised that the Governor Strategic Development Day will be held on Wednesday 5 March 2025 from 1pm to 6pm.

The meeting closed at 16.46pm.