

MEETING OF THE CORPORATION

MINUTES (PART ONE)

Date	Wednesday 14th December
Time	18.00
Location	Brooklands College, Weybridge Campus
Present (Governors):	Chair: Barbara Spittle Ian Carey (Staff Governor) Dr Andrew Gilchrist Fred Gray Joshua Gregory (Student Governor) Melanie Harding Mary Hughes Jackie Pearson Judy Peck Christine Ricketts (Principal and Chief Executive) Paul Stedman Nicholas Woolf OBE
Officers and advisers In attendance	Sarah Glasspool - Executive Director, Finance, Resources and People Performance (EDFRPP) Sarah Clancey – Director of Quality and Standards (DQS) Andrew Russell – Executive Director, Student Support and Stakeholder Relationships (EDSSSR) Melissa Drayson - Director of Governance (DG)
Observers	Paul Mittendorfer – ESFA (via Teams)
Apologies for absence	Hilary Omissi Samuel Dundas (Student Governor) Graeme Baker (Executive Director Curriculum)
Quorum	The meeting was quorate throughout

Item	Action lead
1. Preliminary items	

1.1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Acting Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Hilary Omissi. It was also noted that Graeme Baker was also not able to attend. Both were wished a speedy recovery. Samuel Dundas was noted as not present at the meeting. It was also reported that, regrettably, Bob Pickles had resigned as he had taken up the position of Chair of the Corporation at East Surrey College.

1.2 Declarations of interest

The following standing declarations were noted:

- Melanie Harding - Department for Education, Project Director for School Rebuilding Programmes
- Dr Andrew Gilchrist - Governor at Croydon College.

Other previously declared interests were carried forward. There were no new interests relating to items on the agenda.

1.3 Urgent other business notified in advance

No items of urgent other business had been raised before the meeting.

2. Minutes of previous meetings

It was noted that there were no Part One Minutes requiring approval.

3. Matters Arising

Supporting paper by the Director of Governance

The Corporation noted that all actions from previous meetings had either been completed, were covered on the agenda, or were in progress.

4. Principal and CEO Report, including whole college KPIs

Supporting paper by the PCEO

Governors received a presentation of the key headlines from the report, against each strategic aim.

Aim 1: Produce highly qualified and skilled people to enter the workforce (Learners)

The outcome of the self-assessment process had resulted in a judgement that reflected the dip in achievement and the concern that attendance rates were unacceptably low. Governors were assured that there was a rigorous and immediate College Improvement Plan (CIP) in place. Six priority areas underpinning the CIP were agreed:

1. Focus relentlessly on attendance and punctuality and develop positive behaviours and attitudes to learning.
2. Implement the digital strategy to enhance teaching & learning and provide the information management systems needed for decision making.
3. Increase employer engagement to create a work ready curriculum offer that prepares students for careers today and in the future.
4. Develop viable effective and achievable plans for the College estates.
5. Create a positive working environment which enables staff to develop, feel valued and perform at their best.
6. Strengthen our financial position for the future sustainability of the College.

Aim 2: Be a leading community asset with a strong reputation in order to play a part in driving the local and regional economy

Governors noted the positive progress with the Skills Development Fund project in partnership with Surrey and Hampshire Colleges.

The Corporation was also pleased to note that funding for year two of the Youth Hub had been secured. Data was provided about the positive impact of the Youth Hub during its first year of operation.

Aim 3: Attract and develop the right staff to deliver a high-quality inclusive learning experience

The College had engaged external employment specialists to undertake work with staff, with a view to improving staff satisfaction. Recommendations would be reported to governors later in the year.

The Corporation was presented with a set of options for a staff pay award, to be implemented early in 2023. This would be an additional sum to assist staff with the rising cost of living. It was noted that the college paid less in some areas than neighbouring colleges, and that there was a specific issue that some highly skilled staff were being paid less than £20,000. The Corporation was asked to approve an overall sum for the SLT to implement in the way that supported the majority of staff, particularly those on lower pay bands. It was agreed that senior staff would not receive any pay increase.

Governors considered that there was a risk either way. Doing nothing may cause loss of key staff, further increases to agency costs and instability in teaching and learning. However, the risk of implementing the additional pay award might be a year-end deficit, and a need to find savings elsewhere through vacancy management, staff utilisation, other curriculum efficiencies and growth in apprenticeships.

Staff governors supported the proposal, both from a general perspective of valuing staff, but also as a specific means to attract high quality teaching staff from industry.

Governors expressed support for the proposal of an additional budget for an interim pay award, with a full salary review and job evaluation further down the line.

RESOLVED: That a budget of £245 for an interim staff pay award be APPROVED, with a preference for either option 14 or 15.

AGREED: That a report would be brought to the Resources Committee on exact costs and implementation, including any savings to mitigate the impact on the year-end financial position.

PCEO

Aim 4: Continue to invest in our facilities to create a high quality learning environment and be a resource to the community

It was noted that a full discussion of the estates project would take place under Part Two of the meeting.

An update was received on the potential earlier use of the Capital Transformation Fund, to refurbish the Edge and, possibly, bring forward work on the Tower building.

Aim 5: Ensure robust and self- sustaining finances capable of funding the strategic aims

The Corporation's attention was drawn to the FE sponsored work on curriculum efficiencies, that had also been reported to the Curriculum and Performance Committee and Resources Committee. Other colleges had made significant savings through implementing a curriculum efficiency plan. Proposed KPIs had been added to allow governors to measure progress against targets.

Office for National Statistics reclassification

The key features of the reclassification of FE Colleges as public sector were noted. A more detailed document, and link to a webinar would be shared after the meeting and further discussions would be held at the Strategy Session on 1st February.

DoG

The most immediate impact on the college would be on the need to seek authorisation from the Department for Education for proposed changes to the terms of the bank loan facility agreement. Discussions on this were ongoing and progress would be reported back.

EDFRPP

Key Performance Indicators 2022-23

Governors welcomed the updated KPIs, developed with input from HO and MH following the October Strategy Session. The low staff retention was discussed in the light of the item about staff pay.

It was agreed that comparison with sector averages would be useful where these were available. It was reported that the table would be updated with national Qualification Achievement Rates (QAR) when these were issued at the end of January.

RESOLVED: That the KPIs for 2022-23 be APPROVED

AGREED: That each Committee would monitor KPIs within their remit, and report back to the next Corporation meeting.

**DG/PCE/
Chairs**

Beacon award nomination

Governors welcomed the nomination of Brooklands College for a Beacon Award for College Engagement with Employers, with other Surrey and Hampshire Colleges.

5. Curriculum, Quality and Learning Experience

5.1 Student Governor Report

Verbal report by the Student Governor.

JG gave a positive account of his first term in his second year. He was enjoying the course, and the staffing issues of the previous year had

been resolved, so there was greater consistency. Students would appreciate a broader general enrichment programme. Management confirmed that this currently being developed.

5.2 College Self-Assessment Report 2021-22 (SAR)

Supporting papers presented by the DQS

It was noted that the draft SAR and College Improvement Plan (CIP) had been challenged robustly in a number of forums and had benefited from the input of an Ofsted Inspector.

The SAR grades reported in the Principal and Chief Executive Report were supported.

Governors raised questions about apprenticeship achievement rates, which appeared to have dropped. It was explained that, overall, apprenticeship achievement at 66% had improved by 5.6% and was significantly above the national average of 50%. Some areas (eg carpentry) were 35% above national average.

The College had, however, dealt last year with a large number of learners, on Frameworks, who had passed their end date. The transition from Frameworks to Standards was, however, complete so significant improvement was now predicted. English and Maths had also been an issue, so this was now being front-loaded, so that it could be achieved before learners entered their second year.

RESOLVED: That the Self-Assessment Report 2021-22 for overall effectiveness be APPROVED.

5.3 College Improvement Plan 2022-23 (CIP)

Supporting paper presented by the DQS

The CIP item had been covered under the Principal and Chief Executive Report and set out a robust plan for returning from RI to Good. This would be monitored termly by the CPR Committee.

RESOLVED: That the CIP 2022-23 be APPROVED.

5.4 Report and Recommendations of the Curriculum and Performance Review (CPR) Committee on 23 November 2022

Supporting paper presented by the Chair of CPR Committee

Governors welcome the new Executive Summary format, which flagged key discussion points, with the detail being provided in the minutes. Headlines were:

- The deep dive agenda item was a new approach and had led to a useful discussion on the strategic aim to “attract and develop the right staff to deliver a high-quality inclusive learning experience” in the current climate
- As a result of the SAR process, and to ensure continued governor oversight of quality data, a sub-group had been set up and was meeting half-termly. The expansion of the terms of the group to include curriculum development was being considered.

- As reported previously, student attendance had been discussed at length as a key risk for the college.
- A very useful presentation on the new Marketing Strategy had been received. A key issue was the need for robust MIS support and reliable data for marketing, the skills agenda and to support curriculum efficiencies. The Careers link governor reported that the careers team had reported the need for robust data systems as well.

The report from the CPR Committee was received with thanks.

Joshua Gregory left the meeting.

6. Safeguarding Report

Supporting paper presented by the Chair of CPR Committee/EDSSSR

It was noted that the CPR Committee had already scrutinised the report in detail with input from the Safeguarding Link Governor. Key headlines were

- A discrepancy in achievement between those having support for MH/SG and other students would be interrogated to draw out the underlying reasons. A similar analysis the previous year had produced a mixed picture.
- A new Head of Welfare and Wellbeing had been recruited from the school sector, and was already having a positive impact, specifically with regard to supporting the transition from school to college for some students.

The Safeguarding Report was received with thanks.

7. Finance and Resources

7.1 Management Accounts (October, p3)

Supporting paper presented by the EDFRPPR

The Management Accounts were received. Key headlines were:

- A small operating surplus was planned, although this was under FE Commissioner preferred benchmarks.
- Forecast income would be increased to include the Youth Hub funding.
- A key area of fluctuation was staff pay. The October position was under budget, but this was probably distorted by low pay costs in August, due to there being no sessional or agency staff. Agency staff costs were already over budget for the time of year.
- The other area of risk was energy costs. Gas prices were only capped until April, and were likely to rise for the remaining three months of the year. The current electricity contract was due to end in September 2023. Governors asked that energy costs should be drawn out as a separate expenditure line, and should be reflected in the commentary.
- The cash position was at £3.4m at the end of October. Large increases related to the receipt of funds from the estates project. The cashflow would be adjusted once the final timeline became clearer.

It was noted that the new finance system had been in operation from 1st August. The finance team was in the process of getting used to it, but it would be much simpler to draw off comprehensive reports once it was fully operational.

AGREED: That future management accounts would highlight energy costs as a separate expenditure line and in the commentary.

7.2 Report of the Resources Committee on 30 Nov (Pt1)

Supporting paper presented by the Chair of the Resources Committee

The Chair of the Resources Committee congratulated management on achieving a small surplus the previous year. The Executive Summary and Minutes were noted and recommendations presented for approval.

In considering these, attention was drawn to the excellent progress being made by the college Climate Action Group. In order to develop this work further, particularly in terms of data requirements, a small budget would be needed.

The Chair of Audit queried whether a review of the usage of college IT by students should be undertaken as part of the College's commitment to value for money. It was reported that other college were undertaking similar exercises.

RESOLVED: That, on the recommendation of the Resources Committee:

- i) Additional emergency Capital Expenditure relating to flooding, IT Firewall and replacement of curriculum equipment be APPROVED**
- ii) The AOC Climate Action Roadmap be formally adopted and a sustainability budget should be agreed for 2023-24 budget.**

8. Audit and Risk

8.1 Report of the Audit Committee on 30 November (Part 1)

Supporting paper presented by the Chair of the Audit Committee

The executive summary, Minutes and recommendations were noted. Key headlines were

- The final internal audit reports had been received, along with the internal audit annual report 2021-22. Together these had produced no concerns and a positive assurance opinion was provided for the year.
- A progress report on outstanding audit recommendations had been discussed and revised completion dates agreed.
- The Committee had noted the difficulties in appointing a new Health and Safety officer, which had raised a general question about how key roles were being covered.
- The draft Audit Committee annual report had been received, but a final version would be approved when the financial statements were finalised.

RESOLVED: That, on the recommendation of the Audit Committee:

- i) The Internal Audit Annual Report 2021-22 be APPROVED**
- ii) The updated risk management strategy be APPROVED**
- iii) The updated Audit Committee Terms of Reference be APPROVED**

8.2 Corporate Risk Register

Supporting paper presented by the EDFRPPR

The new Risk Register had been considered by the Audit Committee. This was the result of a detailed review of both risks and scoring by SLT. It was agreed that each Committee should have oversight of risks pertaining to its remit at each meeting.

RESOLVED: That the risk register be APPROVED.

9. Search and Governance

9.1 Report of the Search and Governance Committee on 1st Nov (Pt 1)

Supporting paper presented by the Chair of SGC

The executive summary, Minutes and recommendations were noted.

RESOLVED: that, on the recommendation of the SGC:

- i) Ian Carey be appointed to sit on the Resources Committee**
- ii) The overall grade of Good for governance in 2021-22 be APPROVED.**
- iii) The mandatory External Review of Governance be commissioned for Autumn 2023, with authority delegated to the Search and Governance Committee to agree a terms of reference and budget at its next meeting.**

9.2 Acting Vice Chair appointment

Verbal report by the Director of Governance

Following an invitation to express an interest in the Acting Vice Chair position, Fred Gray had been nominated. It was agreed that Fred had complementary skills to the Acting Chair, and these would be particularly valuable in progressing the estates project. He would continue to serve as Resources Committee Chair. Once a new permanent Chair was appointed, both the Acting Chair and Vice Chair would revert to their previous roles. Fred was thanked by fellow governors for agreeing to step into the role.

RESOLVED: That Fred Gray be appointed as Acting Vice Chair of the Corporation.

9.3 Chair recruitment proposals

Supporting paper by the Director of Governance

It was noted that the college had been accepted for free support with chair recruitment from the DfE funded governor recruitment service.

There was discussion about the remuneration of the new Chair. It was acknowledged that the previous Chair had been paid for work over and above the normal duties of the Chair and that this should not be necessary in future.

RESOLVED:

- i) **That acceptance of free DfE-funded support to recruit a new Chair be APPROVED**
- ii) **That authority be delegated to the Search and Governance Committee to work with Peridot on arrangements for the Chair's recruitment.**

9.4 Reappointment of governors

It was noted that the Terms of Office of Fred Gray and Mary Hughes were due to end in December 2022. Both governors left the meeting for consideration of their reappointment. The specific expertise contributions of both were recognised, along with their high attendance and overall commitment.

RESOLVED: That Fred Gray and Mary Hughes be reappointed for a second four-year term of office, with immediate effect, until 13 December 2026.

10. Dates of Spring Term all-governor meetings

1st February – Strategic Planning Session
1st March – Teaching and Learning Day
29th March Corporation

Signed:

(Chair)

Date: