



**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING
HELD ON 4 October 2023**
Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Mervyn Ward	Chair
Andrew Bainbridge	Member
Martin Berman	Member
Ben Brady	Member
Steven Broomhead	Member
Robert Cox	Member
Andrew Ellams	Member
Nidi Etim	Member
Lucy Gardner	Member
Gillian Hopwood-Bell	Member
Sam Naylor	Member
Nichola Newton	Principal
Paula Rowland	Member
Caroline Rowley	Member
Peter Scott	Member
Kirstie Simpson	Member
Melanie Walsh	Member

In attendance:

Rebecca Anderson-Moss	Assistant Principal: Business Development and Growth
Michelle Seeley	Deputy Principal: Finance and Resources
Rebecca Welch	Assistant Principal: Quality and MIS
Andrew Williams	Vice Principal: Curriculum
Laura Churchill	Clerk to the Corporation
Nicola Meredith*	Director of Marketing
*part of the meeting	

1 The meeting opened at 8:00am. The Board received a presentation on current issues in the sector from Rebecca Durber, North West Director for the AoC.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

For noting: to receive any apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Geoff Spencer

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

For noting: members to declare any interests in items on the agenda

Steven Broomhead declared an interest in agenda item 10, consistent with his position as Chief Executive of Warrington Borough Council.

4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

For resolution: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2023

It was **RESOLVED** that members approved the minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2023 as a correct record.

5 MATTERS ARISING

For discussion: to consider Actions Log and any other matters arising from above

The Clerk reported that the finance KPI working group meeting had now taken place and that there were no further updates in respect of matters arising.

6 CHAIR'S ACTIONS

For resolution: to approve any actions taken by the Chair on behalf of the Corporation since the last meeting

No actions had been taken by the Chair on behalf of the Board since the last meeting.

Nicola Meredith joined the meeting at 8:30am.

7 MARKETING

7.1 Enrolment Update

To receive and note an update on enrolment numbers to date for 23/24

7.1.1 Members heard that the college had had a strong September recruitment intake and that the 16-18 target for 23/24 was 1553 but to date, the college had enrolled 1720 16-18 year old learners. It was reported that the college would make an in-year growth case for numbers in excess of 100 above target. It was explained to members that the college had a 5 week window to ensure that all students were on the right courses and had the skills and attributes necessary to study at the college and therefore during this window, there could be a small reduction in numbers if students were not suited to the college or decided to study elsewhere. It was reported that the college were still getting applications and that the college were now funding 6 bus routes, including bringing learners in from CW postcodes.

7.1.2 The Director of Marketing explained that there was a monetary target for adult recruitment, with a target of £3.5m and £1.5m advanced learner loans. Members were informed that it was too early to establish the adult picture because adult courses started later than 16-18 courses. It was thought that adult recruitment was looking more positive than the previous year and that campaigns were continuing aimed at the adult market. It was explained that HE recruitment stood at 141 learners which was a cause for concern and lower than expected. The difficulties of the HE in FE market was acknowledged. Members were informed that apprenticeship recruitment was buoyant.

Q- A member asked what recruitment at the Winsford campus was looking like.

R- Members were informed that the Institute of Technology ('IoT') was due to commence in September 2024 which was when the campus was expected to be much busier, however, there was currently a small offer at Winsford which did not include 16-18 year old learners who preferred to study at the larger Warrington campus. Members noted that a paper would be taken to Finance and Resources in November with a more detailed breakdown of learner numbers.

Q- A member asked why the college had delayed the start with adult learners.

R- Members were informed that the start date for courses had been delayed until the week commencing the 25 September which had worked well because it allowed parents to settle their children into school before being able to focus on themselves and commence their learning. Members heard that the college had benefitted from attracting learners from other colleges where courses had started early and had then been cancelled because of viability, so the college would repeat the same start time for the next academic year.

7.1.3 It was explained that in regards to adults, the college were looking at courses with smaller numbers and targeting campaigns to try and ensure greater numbers.

7.1.4 Members heard that Katie Whiteman was now in post and had responsibility for building employer networks in the Vale Royal area. It was reported that the college had just submitted a bid as part of the Local Skills Improvement Plan to facilitate the college further investing in the Winsford campus with employers, and if successful, would be launched in the spring or summer term.

Members **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** an update on enrolment numbers for 23/24.

7.2 Marketing Strategy – Commercially sensitive (part II meeting will be opened for this item)

To receive and note the college's marketing strategy 2023 – 2027

8 STRATEGIC MATTERS (led by the principal and other members of the college's ELT)

8.1 Principal's Report

For information: to receive a State of the Nation presentation from the Principal

ACTION 1 – Clerk to circulate the state of the nation video presentation to members.

The Principal summarised the presentation for members, in particular drawing their attention to the bounce back with results set against the context of a challenging national environment.

Members **RECEIVED** the state of the nation presentation.

8.2 Draft Summary SAR

For approval: to consider and if so minded, approve the college summary SAR for 2022/23.

8.2.1 The Assistant Principal: Quality and MIS (AP:QM) thanked members for their attendance at self-assessment validation review panels. Members noted that the summary SAR gave a good overview of where the college was, what was going well and also needed focus. It was proposed that the college self-assessed as good for 22/23 and for the skills element, the management team were suggesting a strong grading. It was reported to members that for 22/23, the college had more areas self-assessing as outstanding and therefore the challenge for the college came around ensuring consistency.

Q- A member asked when looking at gradings by curriculum area overall, what improvements there had been from the previous year.

R- Members were informed that the number of grade 3 areas had remained static but that there had been an increase in movement from grade 2 to grade 1, however, that presented a challenge in terms of a widening gap. It was explained to members that the English and maths

negative movement of grade boundaries significantly impacted the college and that the greatest areas of challenge for the college were English, maths and electrical.

Q- A member asked whether there were mitigating circumstances to explain where areas had been graded a 3 in some of the big, main vocational areas such as hair and beauty.

R- Members heard that staffing was a key challenge, not just for the college but for the whole FE sector including the disparity between teacher and lecturer pay. The Principal also explained that there had been a shift in many areas from coursework to exam based assessment which caused a significant problem for many learners. Members were assured that the college were working on adapting teaching styles and techniques to ensure learners were well prepared for exams.

8.2.2 A member commented that through attendance at the maths SAR, it was clear what pressure the college were under in regards to re-sits and the fact that of the 1700 students enrolled, about 1000 were resitting English, maths or both and that there was no additional funding to support this incredibly large cohort.

It was **RESOLVED** that members approved the college's summary SAR for 22/23.

8.3 Strategic Aims and Key Priorities

For approval: to consider and if so minded, approve the strategic aims and key priorities for 2023/24

8.3.1 The Principal explained that there were no significant changes proposed to the strategic aims and key priorities and that the college were focused on quality, delivering against the accountability agreement, digitalisation and greening and business development. Members heard that Mr Broomhead had commented that the aims should including social capital which would be included going forwards.

Q- A member asked in regards to the equality, diversity and inclusion targets whether objective 6 should come higher?

R- Members were informed that the objectives were not ranked in order of importance but could be amended.

ACTION 2 – equality objective number 6 to be placed higher on the list.

It was **RESOLVED** that members approved the strategic aims and key priorities for 23/24.

8.4 Draft KPIs 2023-24

For approval: to consider and if so minded, approve the KPIs for the academic year 2023-24

8.4.1 As per the matters arising, members heard that a working group of governors were reviewing the financial KPIs and that they were in the process of being amended and that they would be recirculated to the Board at the strategy morning on 3 November.

It was **RESOLVED** that members approved the KPIs for the academic year 2023-24, subject to amendments of the finance KPIs following feedback from the KPI working group.

8.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

For approval: to consider and if so minded, approve the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy for 23-24

8.5.1 The Principal reminded members that the college had engaged a highly credible external consultant to support with the review of equality, diversity, and inclusion, including a thorough review of the policy as presented.

It was **RESOLVED** that members approved the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2023-24.

8.6 Bad Debts Write Off

For approval: to consider and if so minded, approve the write off of bad debts totalling £36,402.96 as recommended by the Finance and Resources Committee

It was **RESOLVED** that members approved the write off of bad debts totalling £36,402.96 as recommended by the Finance and Resources Committee

9 SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

Laura Williams, Director of Safeguarding, will deliver the Board's annual safeguarding training.

It was agreed to postpone the training until the strategy morning to ensure attendance of members.

Andrew Ellams left the meeting at 9:55am

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

For consideration: to consider any items of other business presented to the meeting

10.1 To consider a proposal by Warrington Borough Council in respect of the land on Long Lane

10.1.1 The Deputy Principal: Finance and Resources (DP:FR) explained that the college had been approached by Warrington Borough Council in regards to purchasing a piece of college land to make a bus lane along the A49 from Long Lane. Members heard that it would necessitate repurposing the fencing, replanting trees and redirecting utilities, which would take around 18 months. The DP:FR explained that discussions were commencing with the council around payment, either in kind or financial. Members discussed that following the ONS reclassification of colleges, approval from the Department for Education may need to be sought.

Q- a member asked whether parking would be impacted at the college.

R- Members were informed that parking would not be impacted.

Ben Brady, Nidi Etim and Melanie Walsh left the meeting at 10am.

11 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

For information: to note that the next meeting of the Corporation will take place on Thursday 14 December at 4:30pm.