

**MEETING OF THE CORPORATION**

**MINUTES – PART ONE (non-confidential)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023</b>
<b>Time</b>	18.00 – 20.45
<b>Location</b>	Brooklands College, Weybridge Campus Hub
<b>Present (Governors):</b>	Chair: Prof Craig Mahoney Ian Carey (Staff Governor) Dr Andrew Gilchrist Fred Gray Melanie Harding (via MS Teams) Mary Hughes Hilary Omissi Jackie Pearson Judy Peck Christine Ricketts (Principal and Chief Executive) Louise Salmon (Via MS Teams) Barbara Spittle Paul Stedman
<b>Officers and advisers In attendance</b>	Graeme Baker – Executive Director of Curriculum (EDC) Sarah Clancey – Executive Director of Education (EDE) Ashok Patel – Interim Executive Director of Finance (EDF) Andrew Russell – Executive Director, Student Support and Stakeholder Relationships (EDSSSR) Melissa Drayson - Director of Governance (DG)
<b>Observers</b>	Paul Mittendorfer – ESFA
<b>Apologies for absence</b>	Nicholas Woolf
<b>Quorum</b>	The meeting was quorate throughout

<b>Item</b>	<b>Action lead</b>
<p><b>1. Preliminary items</b></p> <p><b>1.1 Ratification of the appointment of the Chair of the Corporation</b></p> <p>The Director of Governance invited governors to formally ratify the appointment of Professor Craig Mahoney with immediate effect following his appointment as Chair Designate in March.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the appointment of Professor Craig Mahoney as Chair of Corporation be ratified.</b></p> <p>Professor Craig Mahoney then took the Chair.</p>	

## **1.2 Reversion of Acting Chair and Vice Chair to their previous roles.**

**RESOLVED:** That, upon the appointment of Prof Craig Mahoney as Chair of the Corporation:

- a. Dr Barbara Spittle would revert to her role as Vice Chair of Corporation for a two-year period until July 2025.
- b. Fred Gray would cease to be acting Vice Chair of Corporation, and would retain the role of Chair of the Resources Committee.

## **1.3 Student Governor election.**

Nominations for two student governor positions had been sought from the student body. Daniela Clarkson had been elected unopposed. Daniela was studying a degree in Motorsport Engineering and had represented students at recent external employer events.

A further election would be held in September to fill the second vacancy.

## **1.4 Governor Sabbaticals**

The Corporation noted that Hilary Omissi would be returning early from her one-year leave of absence. Hilary was welcomed back to the Corporation.

It was also noted that Jeanette Bell had resigned, so would not be returning at the end of her sabbatical on 1<sup>st</sup> August.

## **1.5 Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

Louise Salmon was welcomed to her first Corporation meeting.

Apologies were received from Nicholas Woolf.

## **1.6 Declarations of interest**

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

## **1.7 Urgent other business notified in advance**

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

## **2. Minutes of previous meetings**

### **2.1 Minutes of Corporation meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2023 (Part one)**

The Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record.

### **2.2 Written Resolutions approved since 29<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

The Corporation noted the approval of the following by written resolution:

10 May 2023: approval of the 2021-22 annual accounts of the College's dormant subsidiary company, Brooklands Enterprises Ltd, and their signature by Fred Gray as sole director

12 May 2023: Delegation of authority to the Estates Working Group to approve tenders for the summer capital works

21 June 2023: approval of the appointment of the Chief Operating Officer, as senior postholder.

### **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. The two 'amber' rated actions (in progress), related to the continued need for robust reporting to governors on measures to implement college systems to ensure the accuracy of data.

### **4. Principal and CEO Report, including progress against whole college KPIs**

*Supporting paper and presentation by the PCEO*

The Corporation receive a presentation of headlines from the written report. As context, governors were reminded of the three strands of quality improvement:

- Accuracy of data to manage performance
- Quality of Teaching and Learning
- Developing a high-performance culture

#### **Emerging good practice**

- Progress had been made in the use of the REMS student record system, but there was still further to go to ensure consistency across all departments;
- A cautious approach had been taken to forecasting achievement rates. A modest improvement to 82% was currently predicted.
- The FE Commissioner team had noted a marked improvement in the Quality of Teaching and Learning at a recent visit, citing particular progress in learner engagement and effective planning.
- Values workshops had been held with all staff teams, leading to the development of the "Brooklands Track". This would be launched at the start of the new academic year and would be aligned to the appraisal process, internal meetings structure and cross college culture.

#### **Areas of weakness:**

- Attendance remained low and resistant to intervention. Some students continued to struggle with the Covid legacy and its impact on mental wellbeing and behaviour.
- The financial position of the college required close monitoring and management. Some progress had been made in year to reduce costs, and a robust curriculum plan had been developed to implement efficiencies, including increasing class sizes. The

use of agency and sessional staff had been reduced significantly and was now tightly managed

### **Local Skills Agenda**

The Corporation was asked to approve the Accountability Statement (AS) as part of the college's response to the local skills agenda, in order to meet the 31<sup>st</sup> July ESFA submission deadline. Governors were reminded of the process leading up to the final version, including two strategy sessions, discussion of the detailed draft at the Curriculum and Performance Review Committee and input from the Acting Chair and Chair designate.

Attention was drawn to a table that mapped LSIP (Local Skills Improvement Plan) priorities and national priorities against the College curriculum plan. This showed that the College was meeting local and national priorities in most areas. Where provision did not reflect LSIP needs, e.g. Hair and Beauty and Public Services, the rationale was explained.

### **Key areas of focus for 2023-24**

- Achieving an improvement in the financial position
- Increasing the applications to enrolment conversion rate. Applications were currently 17% higher than the same point in 2022.
- Addressing student attendance, attitudes and behaviour
- Continuing to improve achievement rates
- Implementing new T Levels
- Implementing planned curriculum efficiencies

It was acknowledged that the outcome of the planning application was expected in the Autumn. It was also likely that the college would receive an Ofsted inspection early in the year.

### **Annual ESFA Strategic Conversation**

The outcomes were noted. Comment was made that this had been a positive experience that demonstrated the supportive relationship with the ESFA.

Governors raised a number of questions and challenges:

*How are issues with student behaviour and attitudes being addressed?*

Management outlined a range of approaches:

- Behaviour walks in the morning and lunch period to ensure a visible management presence
- The work undertaken on college values had strengthened the message that student behaviour was everybody's responsibility.
- Training had been provided to teaching staff on behaviour management in the classroom.
- A security officer post had been created.
- A trauma-informed approach to behaviour management was being adopted

*Are growth targets achievable in areas where it is difficult to recruit staff?*

Management supported the need for a clear plan for such areas, including a targeted recruitment strategy, including possible incentives to attract people from industry to take up teaching, linking to government schemes, such as Teaching Further.

*Retention is lower in 14-16 year olds than other groups. Is this a concern?*

It was reported that many 14-16 students had struggled to stay in school, and retention could not be compared with the wider student body. The CPR Committee had received a detailed presentation on 14-16 provision.

*A key underpin for improving the financial position seems to be the increase in class sizes. How will management report back to the Corporation Board, and in what sort of timeframe?*

Daily meetings would be held during enrolment to work toward achieving class size targets. The Resources Committee would receive an updated budget, based on student recruitment, in early October. Due to the high number of staff vacancies, the main drive would be on deploying current staff efficiently, and converting sessional staff to permanent. The biggest impact of the curriculum efficiency implementation would be on the use of agency staff.

In response to further questions, it was confirmed that a staff CV mapping exercise would be undertaken in the Autumn Term.

It was clarified that the class-size target of 16 was a minimum, not a cap. If the college was able to maximise enrolments, many classes would be infilled.

*The summary of 2023-24 priorities is very helpful. It would be helpful to monitor progress against these at each meeting. How will momentum would be sustained to maintain focus on priority areas, anticipate problems before they arise, and prevent slippage?*

Management gave assurance that messages were clearly and regularly communicated at all levels of the organisation. This included a weekly briefing on data for all teachers and managers, support to Heads of Learning to establish consistent use of data and enhanced accountability.

*Will some of the priorities around teacher engagement be reflected in objectives?*

Part of the work undertaken has been to revise the appraisal process. align this with values work and link to attendance and teaching and learning targets.

Further comment was made that, with so many initiatives, more thought was needed about governors' data requirements and how these might be triangulated to assist governors in tracking and forming their own opinion on progress. It was agreed that consideration should be given

to producing a real-time dashboard that governors could access between meetings.

**RESOLVED: That, on the recommendation of the CPR Committee, the Accountability Statement be APPROVED**

**ACTIONS:**

- |      |   |                  |
|------|---|------------------|
| i)   | That a curriculum growth plan, including addressing staff shortages, would be brought to CPR Committee; | PCE              |
| ii)  | That a whole-Corporation discussion on governors' data needs would be held at a future meeting;         | Chair/Dir<br>Gov |
| iii) | That the development of a live data dashboard for governors would be investigated.                      | PCE              |

**5. Curriculum, Quality and Learning Experience**

**5.1 Report and Recommendations of the Curriculum and Performance Review (CPR) Committee on 21 June 2023**

*Supporting paper presented by the Chair of CPR Committee*

Headlines from the Minutes were highlighted

- Helpful and informative presentations had been received from staff on ESOL, 14-16 provision and Teaching and Learning initiatives. Allowing sufficient time for such input would be important at future meetings. It was suggested that briefings to the full Corporation should also be planned to tie in with key strategic reporting points.
- The Curriculum Plan for 2023-24 had been reviewed in detail and was recommended for approval.

There was discussion about the development of whole college KPIs. A bottom up approach was taken to aligning course-level targets with whole college ones, and reflecting these in staff appraisals.

**5.2 Curriculum Plan 2023-24**

*Supporting paper presented by the Executive Director Curriculum*

The Corporation took assurance from the detailed presentation and discussion at the Curriculum and Performance Review Committee. Governors commented that the delivery of the plan should be a key focus during the forthcoming year.

**RESOLVED: That the Curriculum Plan 2023-24 be APPROVED.**

**6. Safeguarding Report**

*Supporting paper presented by the Safeguarding governor/EDSSSR*

Governors noted that Safeguarding Report had been discussed in detail by the Curriculum and Performance Review Committee.

The Safeguarding Governor provided additional reflections and assurance that the report reflected activities and key issues accurately. The safeguarding governor had met with staff regularly, providing helpful insight into the curriculum, along with reassurance that the safeguarding team was working well to keep students safe. There had, however,

been limited progress on addressing the achievement gap between 'safeguarded' students and the full student cohort. Management reported that the gap had been narrowed from 10% to 7% this year. However, the performance of high needs students was above the college average.

It was noted that the new Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance had been issued. All staff and governors were required to read Section 1. It was agreed that this would be issued by email and a training session would be arranged early in the new academic year.

The Safeguarding Governor was thanked for her work during the year, and for taking on the role of SEND Link Governor. It was noted that a successor for the safeguarding governor role would need to be found.

**The Safeguarding Termly Report was RECEIVED with thanks.**

**ACTIONS:**

- i. **All governor training on Safeguarding and the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education to be organised in the Autumn Term**
- ii. **That a successor for the Safeguarding Governor role would be appointed at an appropriate time.**

Dir Gov/  
EDSSSR

**7. Finance and Resources**

**7.1 Report and Recommendations of the Resources Committee on 13 June 2023 (Part 1)**

*Supporting papers presented by the Chair of Resources Committee*

Headlines from the Minutes were presented, including:

- A presentation from the Curriculum Efficiencies project review by London South East Colleges, resulting in a number of recommendations, many of which were in the process of being implemented.
- Discussion of the April Management Accounts, which now showed a consistent picture with regard to the year-end position.
- The outcomes of a review of health and safety which had led to a number of actions. The new H&S Link Governor reported that this was a substantial piece of work, and that he had had regular meetings with management to monitor progress. Whilst many actions were being addressed, some would require significant culture change. There was a risk that the Head of Estates would not be able to undertake all of the work required on his own.

**7.2 Managements Accounts May 2023**

*Supporting paper presented by the Interim Executive Director Finance*

An update was given on the latest position. This showed a further expenditure linked to the interest payment on the ESFA loan. This would continue until the loan crystallised in 2030.

Assurance was given that the college would have cash headroom to remain within its bank covenants, but there would be critical points in the

first three months of the next financial year. Cashflow would continue to be a key issue for the college in the future. An update on expenditure on the estates project was provided, with this partially offset by the deposit from Cala Homes.

The college would need to ensure that it had funds to support a planning appeal if it was turned down. Governors supported taking a prudent approach in terms of financial planning. More information was requested on the possible timescale and sums involved in an appeal, and the potential impact on the college operating position. This would be sought from Fusion and reported back.

It was reported that there was also an element of risk attached to the expenditure of the FE Capital Transformation Funding by the deadline, although the ESFA had indicated that it might grant an extension.

Governors asked for an update on applications for Local Skills Improvement Funds (LSIF). A joint bid had been submitted with the Surrey and North Hampshire colleges group for the development of a Centre for Green Skills and Technology. The outcome of the application for mobilisation funding would be reported back to governors.

### **7.3 Budget and Financial Plan 2023-24**

*Supporting paper presented by the Interim Executive Director Finance.*

The budget assumptions and draft financial plan had been considered by governors several times in previous months, most recently at the June Resources Committee. The only change to the Resources Committee paper was the inclusion of the annual ESFA loan interest liability.

The papers comprised three sections:

- The College Financial Forecast Return (CFFR) using the ESFA template
- The Capital masterplan budget
- The College operating position

The capital and operating budgets were presented separately so that the operating position was not obscured by capital cash movements.

Governors were reminded of the central budget objectives:

- Achievement of 1.5 – 2% operating surplus
- Stay within norms of pay costs as a percentage of income for equivalent sized colleges
- Cashflow to operate without any need for cash injections from elsewhere
- Achievement of efficiencies without staff restructuring

Student numbers would be monitored closely, and daily meetings held with managers during the enrolment period ensure that learners were put on the right courses and the new class size targets were met.

In response to governors' questions, management explained that the budget for agency and sessional would be used in exceptional



circumstances only, as every effort would be made to use establishment teaching staff first.

It was agreed that the budget would be revisited at the first Resources Committee in 2023-24, once student recruitment was known.

**RESOLVED: that the budget 2023-24 and financial plan to 2025 be APPROVED.**

## **8. Audit and Risk**

### **9.1 Report of the Audit Committee on 23 May 2023**

*Supporting paper presented by the Chair of Audit Committee*

The Corporation noted the summary report and the minutes. The Chair highlighted that the internal audits on safeguarding and apprenticeships had each resulted in an opinion of reasonable assurance.

**RESOLVED: That, on recommendation of the Audit Committee, the following be APPROVED:**

- **Internal Audit Strategy for 2023-24, presented by TIAA**
- **Financial Statements and Regularity Audit Plan for year end 31 July 2023, presented by Buzzacott LLP.**

### **8.2 Corporate Risk Register**

*Supporting paper presented by the Chair of Audit Committee and Interim EDF*

The Chair of Audit Committee confirmed that the Committee had discussed the risk register thoroughly (as evidenced in the committee minutes), and confirmed that this was still contemporary and appropriate. Comment was made that risk should be reviewed against every decision made by SLT, and the risk register updated as required.

## **9. Search and Governance**

### **9.1 Report of the Search and Governance Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

*Supporting paper presented by the Chair of SGC*

The report was received and attention was drawn to:

- Recruitment of new governors. The Director of Governance had undertaken a preliminary search resulting in six applications. The search panel would be holding interviews over the summer.
- The joint governor training that had been arranged on 20<sup>th</sup> September, hosted at Weybridge. All governors were urged to attend.
- The appointment of AOC to undertake the forthcoming External Governance Review in late 2023/early 2024.
- Agreement that the annual Governance Self-Assessment would be undertaken in the summer holidays as usual.
- The development of SEND and Health and Safety Link Governor roles and relaunch of the Employer Engagement Link Governor role, all of which had now been filled.

- Review and recommendation of the Corporation Scheme of Delegation for approval.

Governors who had put themselves forward for Link Governor roles were thanked for their commitment. Any governor interested in taking over the Safeguarding Governor role from Mary Hughes was invited to express an interest.

**RESOLVED: that, on the recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee:**

- i. **The following link governor appointments be made:**
  - **SEND: Mary Hughes**
  - **Health and Safety: Paul Stedman**
  - **Employers/ external stakeholders: Louise Salmon**
- ii. **The Corporation Scheme of Delegation be APPROVED**

**9.2 Calendar of governance meetings 2023-24**  
*Supporting paper by the Director of Governance*

The draft had been considered at Search and Governance Committee and circulated previously to all governors with a request for feedback.

**RESOLVED: That meeting dates for 2023-24 be APPROVED.**

**9.3 Senior Postholder Employment Committee**  
*Supporting paper by the Director of Governance*

The Corporation considered two recommendations from the meeting of the SPEC on 29<sup>th</sup> June.

**RESOLVED**

- i. **That the revised Senior Postholder Employment Committee Terms of Reference be APPROVED**
- ii. **That the Senior Postholder Remuneration and Appraisal Policy be APPROVED.**

**9.4 Revised Estates Working Group Terms of Reference**  
*Supporting paper by the Director of Governance*

**RESOLVED: That the revised Estates Working Group Terms of Reference be APPROVED.**

**10. Thanks to governors**

The Corporation recorded its thanks to Melanie Harding and Nicholas Woolf who were both standing down from their governor roles due to changes in location and commitments. Both had made an excellent contribution through their expertise and knowledge, especially in major educational builds and finance.

The resignation of Graeme Baker from his position as Executive Director Curriculum was also acknowledged with regret. The Corporation thanked Graeme for his positive impact on the college, his sterling work

on the curriculum plan and wished him good health and success for the future.

Finally, thanks were conveyed to Barbara Spittle and Fred Gray for their hard work and commitment as Acting Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporation respectively, since November 2023.

**11. Dates of Autumn Term 2023 all-governor meetings**

20 September: Governor workshop and Surrey colleges training event  
18 October: Strategy session and mini Corporation meeting  
8 November: Self-Assessment Report validation (voluntary opt-in)  
13 December: Corporation Board

**Signed:**

**(Chair)**

**Date:**