

*Item 21 of these minutes are deemed to be CONFIDENTIAL by virtue of Instrument 14(4) and 16(2) as they contain personal information. These minutes are not available for public circulation and are held separately by the Clerk to the Corporation.*

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION BOARD MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2024**

Present:

**Governors:**

Angela Briggs	Karen Jackson
Rebecca Chamley	Preetha Kumar
Greg Clarke	Philippa Poland
Sue Craggs	John Rees
Dan Fell	Lee Tillman
Peter Grant	Lee Walker
Sam Hewson	Andrea Ward

The quorum for the meeting was nine members. The meeting was quorate.

**In attendance:**

Danny Fenwick	Deputy Principal
Sharon Harmon	Clerk to the Corporation
Rachel Maguire	Chief Operating Officer, People and Information
Barrie Shipley	Chief Operating Officer, Finance and Infrastructure
Dan Wilson	Vice Principal Business Growth, Skills & Partnerships (Item 1-3)
David Wright	External Board Reviewer

The meeting took place on MS Teams and started at 5.00 pm.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Minutes</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Mark Swales, Emma Kirk, Dolly Agoro, Tina Greaves, Ruth Brook and Aaron Eagles.</p>	
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>Members should declare any personal or financial obligation, allegiance or loyalty which would in any way affect decisions in relation to the subjects under discussion.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest made.</p>	
<b>3</b>	<p><b>2025-26 Sub-Contractors</b></p> <p>The Vice Principal Business Growth, Skills &amp; Partnerships (VPBGS&amp;P) presented a detailed report on proposed subcontracting arrangements for 2024/25. Members noted that the annual review of subcontracted provision by the Projects and Contracts team was held in May 2024. The review included evaluating the quality of existing providers, the demand for provision, cost efficiency and the rationale for subcontracted provision in line with DfE and ESFA funding rules. Members considered the recommendation for subcontracting for 2024/25 to continue with the existing subcontractors for Further Education provision; two providers of</p>	

study programmes, one provider of adult education provision one apprenticeship provider and one minor sub-contract within healthcare apprenticeships to an employer provider. Member considered the management fees and rationale for the recommended subcontracting provision. Members discussed longer term expectations in relation to subcontracting. Members commented on the value and quality of proposed subcontracting programmes and were assured the recommended subcontracting was fulfilling a necessary gap in provision.

**Resolution:** The Corporation Board approved the recommended subcontracting provision for 2024/25.

#### **4 Minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and any matters arising**

The minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record.

There were no matters arising.

#### **5 Feedback from Committee Meetings**

Members received the Committee Chairs' feedback reports from the meetings of the Search & Governance Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024, Curriculum Quality & Performance Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024, the Audit and Risk Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024, the HEPQ committee on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024, the People & Transformation Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2024 and the Finance & Resources Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

#### **6 CEO Report**

The CEO presented an update report covering a range of whole College updates concerning College performance, partnership updates and key policy implications. Members noted that overall performance against most of the College's Key Performance Indicators remains strong, with some notable in year improvements in student progress and recruitment measures.

Members discussed recruitment and applications for 2024/25 Academic Year. Members noted the positive position and asked about capacity and planning of provision for the number of applications received. The CEO explained the business, curriculum and resource planning process for provision and student enrolment. Members were assured by the robustness of the planning processes in place.

Members commented on the many College and student achievements and awards highlighted in the report and congratulated the College on the numerous student success stories and recognised the outstanding achievements of students,

Members noted that the Barrett Values Cultural Assessment survey was re-run during May 2024. Members were reminded that the survey was last undertaken in 2022, with the outcomes being fed into the strategic planning cycle. Members were assured that the response rate for the May survey has been extremely high and that outcomes will be analysed, and results will be shared with staff and governors.

Members noted Senior Staff change.

Members noted the update on key partnership developments since the last Board meeting and commented on the wide range of partnership activity and positive progress.

Members noted that the approved Annual Accountability Statement had been submitted to the DFE in line with the required timetable and contractual requirements and is published on the College website.

Members discussed key policy updates and recognised that key policy impacts are likely following the recent general election and discussed the College's engagement with the incoming Secretary of State for Education and local MPs.

Members were reminded of the invitation to attend the HE graduation on 29 October 2024.

Members thanked the CEO for the informative update report.

## **7 Strategic Plan Progress Report**

The CEO presented a Strategic Plan progress update report outlining progress updates against each of the strategic plan projects since the report to the last Corporation meeting, providing a snapshot of key actions, impact to date and next steps planned. Members noted that many of the updates provided at committee meetings have provided more detail around the actions and impacts of specific projects.

Members asked about staff engagement with the strategic plan and managing project responsibilities. Members were assured that projects are aligned with roles and provide focus to improving effectiveness of systems which aids management of workload. Governors who had attended a recent CLEF meeting reported that they were assured that staff were feeling engaged with the Strategic Plan.

Members asked about the plans for the review and redesign of the College stakeholder boards. The VPBGS&P provided members with a detailed overview of the work underway, stakeholder engagement and progress with the reestablishment of effective stakeholder groups.

## **8 Re-branding DN Colleges Group**

CEO presented a proposal, for the Corporation Board's consideration, to explore the potential re-branding of the DN Colleges Group. Members noted that since the time of merger in 2017, the College has continued to operate under the branding and logos of two separate colleges, in addition, to the new DN Colleges name and logo.

Members discussed a potential re-branding considering any possible impact, positive or negative, on sales and recruitment, stakeholder engagement and reputation and internal and external communications. Following discussion members agreed that a refresh of the brand could bring greater cohesion and benefits across the Group. Members discussed the potential risks of re-branding and agreed the need for a Group brand with purpose which is clearly understood and recognised and ensures that the local college brands maintain the local identity and relevance.

Members discussed the potential financial implications and recognised there are no immediate financial implications at this exploratory stage but acknowledged that if a

full rebranding exercise were to take place, this may have significant cost implications, particularly in terms of physical signage and other hard copy assets. Members agreed that a branding approach which more effectively engages with new market potential may have a positive impact on commercial revenue generation in particular.

Members agreed that further work be undertaken to develop a series of re-branding options for consideration by the Board.

**Resolution:** The Corporation Board approved the establishment of a management led working group to develop group branding options for presentation to the Corporation Board for consideration at a future meeting.

## **9 Management Accounts**

The Chief Operating Officer, Finance and Infrastructure (COOFI) presented the Management Accounts update report providing an updated position of financial performance for the period August 2023 – May 2024. Members noted that the Finance & Resources Committee received an update on the Management Accounts to April 2024 at its Committee Meeting on 24 June 2024 and that these latest management accounts project a slight improvement for the year to date from the April Management Accounts.

Members considered the Management Accounts report noting the advised variations to income and expenditure and the current projections resulting in a significant improvement in forecast outturn compared to budget and the last report to the Board, and forecast 'Outstanding' financial health grade.

Members noted, in the context of the improved financial performance forecast, a proposed £300 pro-rata staff bonus payment is recommended to the Corporation Board, with payment deferred to December 2024. Members were advised that this is included in the revised forecast and can be accrued in the 2023/24 financial year with payment deferred to December 2024 if approved. Members were assured that the accounting treatment of this has been agreed with the external auditors. Members agreed to defer the decision until the Financial Plan 2024-26 had been considered in the next item.

Members noted the new format of the Management Accounts and agreed the new format was very helpful and easy to understand.

## **10 Financial Plan 2024-26**

The COOFI presented the Financial Plan 2024-26 and commentary noting it is required for approval and submission to the ESFA by the 31st of July 2024 and will be the baseline budget for the 2024/25 financial year. Members were advised that the financial plan follows a comprehensive business planning round and confirm and challenge meetings with all budget holders. Members noted a first draft of the financial plan was reviewed in detail by the Finance & Resources Committee at its meeting on 24 June 2024.

Members were advised that the Financial Plan for 2024/25 to 2025/26 once approved by the Corporation Board and will form the basis for completion of the College Financial Forecast Return (CFFR) to be submitted to the ESFA by 31st July 2024.

Members noted that the financial plan complies with the College's bank loan covenants and translates into ESFA Financial Health grades of Outstanding for 2023/24 and Good for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

Members considered the Financial Plan 2024-26 noting current planning assumptions and key risks identified within the plan. Members noted that the financial plan presents an improved position against the two-year financial plan approved in July 2023. Members sought further clarification of assumptions around funding streams. The COOFI provided a detailed explanation of funding streams. Members thanked the COOFI for presenting the Financial Plan 2024-26 and detailed commentary report.

**Resolution:** The Corporation Board approved the Financial Plan for 2024-26 for submission to the ESFA by 31st July 2024.

Following approval of the Financial Plan for 2024-26 members considered the proposed £300 pro-rata staff bonus payment discussed under item 9.

**Resolution:** The Corporation Board approved the additional £300 bonus payment (pro rata), with payment to be deferred to December 2024.

#### **11 Student Tuition Fees Policy 2024-25**

Members received and reviewed the Student Tuition and Examination Fees Policy 2024-25 noting the policy includes the increase in HE fees for 2024-25 previously approved by the Corporation Board and covers funding compliance updates.

**Resolution:** The Corporation Board approved the Tuition and Examination Fees Policy 2024-2025.

*Note: Rebecca Chamley left the meeting.*

#### **12 Board Membership Update**

Members received and considered the Board membership update report. Members noted and agreed updates to Board and Committee membership. Members noted and agreed the proposed recruitment plan for external governors.

Members considered the reappointment of B Lawrance as a coopted member of the CQP Committee for a second 4-year term of office. Members noted the valuable experience and expertise that B Lawrance provides to the CQP Committee.

**Resolution:** The Corporation Board approved the reappointment of B Lawrance as a coopted member of the CQP committee for a second 4-year term of office with effect from the 1 August 2024.

Members noted that D Agoro, L Tillman and A Ward would be leaving the Board on 31 July 2024. The Chair on behalf of the Board recorded thanks and appreciation to D Agoro, L Tillman and A Ward for their valuable contribution as members of the Board.

#### **13 Corporation Board Calendar of Meetings 2024/25**

Members considered the Board's proposed calendar of meetings for the academic year 2024/25. There were no comments on the proposed dates.

**Resolution:** Members approved the Board's calendar of meetings for the academic year 2024/25.

#### **14 Approval of Committee Cycles of Business 2024/25**

Members reviewed the proposed Cycle of Business for the Corporation Board and its Committees for 2024-25.

Members noted that each committee cycle of business had been considered by the respective committee and recommended to the Board for approval.

Members agreed the Cycle of Business for the Corporation Board.

**Resolution:** The Corporation Board approved the Cycle of Business for the Corporation Board and its Committees for 2024-25.

*Note: A Ward left the meeting.*

#### **15 Link Governor Reports**

Members received Link Governor reports from Link Governors covering Link Governor visits and activities during the 2023-24 academic year. Reports were presented from the Link Governor for Safeguarding / EDI, the Link Governor for Digital IT Infrastructure and Business Systems and Information, the Link Governor for Apprenticeships, the Link Governor for Estates & H&S, the Link Governor for Careers/IAG, the Link Governor for SEND and the Link Governor for Skills.

Link Governors reported that they had found the link visits and activities valuable and informative and were impressed and assured by the work ongoing across the Group.

Members thanked the Link Governors for providing comprehensive reports and for the exceptional work that had been undertaken throughout the 2023/24 academic year. Members reiterated the value of the link roles and great deal of assurance received from the Link Governor reports.

#### **16 Use of Whistleblowing Policy / Use of College Seal 2023/24**

Members received a report detailing the use of the College of Whistleblowing Policy and use of the College Seal during the 2023/24 academic year. Members noted that the College seal had been applied once since the last report to the Board in July 2023. Members noted that there have been no reports raised under the Whistleblowing Policy during the 2023/24 academic year.

#### **17 Written Resolutions and Chair's Actions**

Members noted the Chair's actions and Written Resolutions which had been approved since the Corporation Board meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

#### **18 Governance Development Plan**

Members reviewed the summer term 2024 updates to Governance Development Plan 2023-26. Members noted that progress against planned actions and noted the good progress made. Members noted the Governance Development Plan would be reviewed and updated for approval at the next Board meeting in October 2024.

**19 Minutes of Committee Meetings:**

Members received the minutes of the following committee meetings for information:

- HE Performance & Quality – 13 March 2024, 17th June 2024
- Search & Governance – 15 May 2024
- Curriculum Quality & Performance – 5th June 2024
- Audit and Risk – 12th June 2024
- People & Transformation – 19th June 2024
- Finance & Resources – 24th June 2024

**20 Any Other Business**

Members noted that updates to staff policies and procedures following imminent changes in employment law would be circulated for approval in due course.

**21 Confidential Items**

All meeting attendees except for external Governors left the meeting for this confidential item.

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**22 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Corporation Board is scheduled for 5.30pm on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at North Lindsey College.

The meeting closed at 7.40 pm.

**Sharon Harmon**  
**Clerk to the Corporation**

**Signed:** ..... (Chair)      **Date:** .....

TABLE OF ACTIONS				
Date	Minute	Action	Responsibility	Date Due