

*Discussions under Item 5 of these minutes are deemed to be CONFIDENTIAL by virtue of Instrument 14(4) and 16(2) as they contain business sensitive 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 16<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2024

Present:

### Governors:

Angela Briggs (Chair)	Sam Hewson
Ruth Brook	Emma Kirk
Greg Clarke	Preetha Kumar (via Teams)
Sue Craggs	Philippa Poland
Dan Fell (via Teams)	John Rees (CEO)
Peter Grant	Mark Swales
Tina Greaves	Lee Walker

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

### In attendance:

Sharon Harmon	Clerk to the Corporation
Barrie Shipley	Chief Operating Officer, Finance and Infrastructure (via Teams)
Rachel Maguire	Chief Operating Officer, People and Information
Danny Fenwick	Deputy Principal

The meeting took place in the Lindsey Suite Lounge, North Lindsey College and on MS Teams and started at 5.30 pm.

Item	Minutes	Action
<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	
	Apologies for absence were received from Rebecca Chamley (Staff Governor) and Karen Jackson (Governor).	
<b>2</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	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.	
	There were no declarations of interest made.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Feedback from Committee Meetings</b>	
	Members received the Committee Chairs' feedback reports from the meetings of the Search & Governance Committee on 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2024 and the Audit and Risk Committee on 2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2024.	
<b>4</b>	<b>Minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024 and any matters arising</b>	
	The minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held on 10 <sup>th</sup> July 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record.	

There were no matters arising.

## 5 CEO Report

The CEO presented a report covering a range of whole College updates including People Services, North Lindsey College new build project, partnerships, achievements and key policy implications.

Members reviewed and discussed the key staff metrics for the 2023/24 academic year. Members noted overall a significant and positive movement in the metrics over the full year. Members agreed the positive metrics demonstrate the College continues to be a positive place to work and are a good indicator that objectives and strategic projects are correct and working. Members discussed some areas of continued challenge around recruitment and retention and were assured by strategies in place to support continued improvement in these areas. Members noted the senior staffing changes highlighted in the report.

Members discussed the results of second Barret Values survey which was conducted in the summer term and two years after the initial review. Members noted that the results show that the organisation has made a positive shift on organisational culture score. Members agreed overall, the degree of positive movement is encouraging and a great achievement for the College. Members discussed future plans, and the Group's focus on taking steps to support and sustain further gains.

Members briefly discussed the staff pay award and noted the update on the AoC's recommendations.

Members reviewed the summary Student Support Data Report for the academic year 2023/24. Members discussed student support and wellbeing. The COOPI provided an update on the support and intervention activities provided by the student support team. Members were impressed by the amount and scope of student support activity across the Group.

Members noted that an update on the Branding working group will be provided at a future meeting.

Members noted and discussed changes to the Ofsted inspection framework. Members discussed the introduction of the 'skills measure' which places additional emphasis on the way in which institutions meet the skills needs of their communities. The CEO outlined the wide scope of the Group's employer engagement. Members agreed this is something the Group does well. Members commented on the number of College engagements with employers and discussed the nature of these engagements.

**Note:** *P Grant joined the meeting.*

The COOFI presented a detailed update on the progress of the new build project at North Lindsey College. Members noted the significant progress made and were assured that overall, the project is on programme. Members noted the current risks to the project and were assured by mitigations in place. Members asked about operational readiness, transition planning and financial pressures. Members were assured that the operational readiness programme was on schedule and contingency planning is in place. Members were assured that the financial plan includes

contingencies for unforeseen circumstances. Members noted the Collage has a detailed plan around IT specification and infrastructure.

***Note:** Members discussed a confidential item. The minutes of this item are not available for public circulation and are held separately by the Clerk to the Corporation*

Members discussed the Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (DBTH) partnership and considered the partnership document which has been co-developed between DNCG and DBTH colleagues over the past few months. Members noted the work already undertaken in the partnership and the plans and ambitions for the future along with the high-level delivery plan. Members agreed on the many benefits of the partnership and recognised and supported the establishment of this more formalised strategic partnership. Members noted the proposed formal launch of the partnership at a joint event scheduled for December 2024.

Members noted and congratulated the College on reaching the shortlist in a number of award categories for the upcoming Doncaster Chamber Business Awards.

Members discussed the College's engagement with World Skills and acknowledged the achievements of the College and students and the many benefits of participation in this event.

Members noted and discussed updates on policy and funding covering qualifications reform, Skills England and the new Growth and Skills Levy. Further to members discussion, the CEO expand on the scope and programme of the curriculum review, provided an update on Level 3 funding and explained the role of Skills England. Members had a further discussion around curriculum planning.

## **6 Strategic Plan Update**

The CEO presented a Strategic Plan progress update report providing a full-year summary of progress during year one of the College strategy and proposing a focus for development and delivery of key strategic projects for the coming year. Members noted that positive progress has been made against a significant majority of the first-year projects, many of which will now become embedded in business-as usual operational delivery. The CEO outlined the identified key strategic projects for the 2024/25 academic year and members agreed that the projects identified will build on the progress made in some key areas across the student experience, staff development and engagement, curriculum strategy and service excellence.

Members congratulated the College on the amount of positive work, progress and change management that has taken place in year one.

## **7 College Performance Update**

The Deputy Principal presented a performance and recruitment update report providing an update on curriculum performance outcomes and the financial outturn for the 2023/24 academic year and updating on the current curriculum performance and recruitment for 2024/25 year to date.

Members considered the curriculum performance outcomes for the 2023/24 academic year. Members noted positive attendance, retention and achievement across all provision. Members were assured that targets were met or surpassed in the majority of provision types. Members were further assured that there were no

significant gaps identified in retention and achievement across student groups but noted there was a slight gap in achievement between Doncaster College and North Lindsey College. Members agreed the gap was not significant and were assured by planned measures to support addressing any gaps and monitoring achievement.

Members requested that, where possible, future performance reports to the Board include the number of learners included in percentages reported.

Members noted the summary of the draft financial outturn for the 2023/24 academic year. The COOFI provided an overview of financial performance highlighting variants in income and expenditure compared to budget. Members were assured by an overall improved financial position compared to budget and forecast and noted an ESFA Financial Health Rating of 'Outstanding' has been achieved.

Members agreed that the College had performed very strongly both in terms of curriculum and financially in the 2023/24 academic year, noting in most cases, beyond internally set KPI's and national benchmarks.

Members discussed measures of learner achievement. The DP set out targets against KPIs / measures for 2024/25 for each provision type. The DP explained that the targets take into account performance to date and various benchmarking data. The DP explained the metrics for tracking learners progress including identifying students at risk of not achieving. The DP explained supports and interventions in place for learners at risk of not achieving. The DP explained that students are supported from the start of the learner journey including supporting students onto the right courses. Members were pleased to see continued high aspirations for students.

Members discussed the Group's financial performance 2024/25 year to date and were assured by the positive financial performance to date. Members acknowledged a strong start to the 2024/25 academic year in terms of recruitment and retention so far.

## **8 Health & Safety Policy**

Members received and considered updates to the Health & Safety Policy. Members noted that the policy had been reviewed and recommended for approval by the Audit and Risk committee at the committee meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024. Members agreed the updates were helpful and appropriate.

**Resolution:** The Corporation Board approved the updated Health & Safety Policy.

## **9 External Board Review Report**

Members received the draft External Board Review Summary Report for consideration for publication. Members noted the DNCG External Board Review was completed by David Wright on behalf of the AoC in July 2024. The final report was agreed and circulated to the Corporation Board for information in July 2024. Members were advised that following completion of the External Board Review, Boards are recommended to make available a summary of the review findings on the organisation's website. Members considered the draft External Board Review Summary Report and agreed it was an accurate and appropriate summary of the External Board Review Report.

**Resolution:** The Corporation Board approved the External Board Review Summary Report for publication.

## 10 Board Membership Update

Members noted the current membership of the Corporation Board, Subsidiaries Boards and Corporation Board committees. Members noted Governors and Directors with terms of office ending in the 2024/25 academic year. Members noted there were no changes to Link Governor roles for 2024/25. Members noted governor vacancies on the Corporation Board and discussed recruitment strategies. The Clerk explained that a recruitment programme was currently underway to fill external governor and student governor vacancies. The Clerk advised that the search committee had conducted interviews with perspective external governors on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October and following interviews propose the appointment of Helen Kirby-Hawkins to the Board.

Members considered Helen Kirby-Hawkins' application and voted on the appointment.

**Resolution:** The Corporation Board ratified the appointment of Helen Kirby-Hawkins to the Corporation Board.

## 11 Governance Self-Assessment Report

Members noted that the AoC's College's Code of Good Governance for English Colleges, which the College has adopted, recommends that Corporation Board's should undertake an annual governance self-assessment. The Clerk advised members that the Governance Self-Assessment for 2023-24 has been completed for inclusion in the College wide SAR and presented the draft Board Self-Assessment Report for Corporation Board consideration. Members noted that the information in the draft Board Self-Assessment Report is taken from the outcome of a gap analysis against the Association of College's Code of Good Governance for English Colleges, the outturn on the 2023-24 targets in the Governance Development Plan and the findings of the External Board Review completed in July 2024.

The Clerk explained that the Board Self-Assessment Report will be moderated as part of the College wide SAR validation process and confirmed that any areas for development identified in the self-assessment will be incorporated into the Governance Development Plan 2024-27.

The Chair of the Search and Governance Committee confirmed that the Board Self-Assessment Report was considered by the Search and Governance Committee at its meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and is recommended for Board approval.

Members considered the report and agreed that the Board continues to be effective, remains fit for purpose and met its objectives in 2023-24 and that the assessments in the report were appropriate and accurate.

**Resolution:** Members approved the Governance Self-Assessment Report for 2023-24 pending validation review as part of the College wide SAR validation process.

## 12 Governance Development Plan

Members considered the draft Governance Development Plan 2024-27. Members agreed the updates to performance area targets set out in the draft Governance Development Plan 2024-27. Members agreed the areas of focus outlined support the continued development and strengthening of the Corporation Board to ensure continued good governance. Members noted updates to performance targets are

taken from the outturn on the Governance Development Plan 2023-26, outcome of a gap analysis against the Association of Colleges' Code of Good Governance for English Colleges, feedback from Governors as part of annual review process, and the findings of the External Board Review concluded in July 2024.

Members noted that the draft Governance Development Plan 2024-27 was considered by the Search and Governance Committee at its meeting on 30th September 2024 and is recommended for Board approval.

Members discussed governor training for the 2024/25 academic year and agree a training session on the use of AI addressing challenges and opportunities would be welcomed. Members agreed to discuss Board training further at the Board Development Day on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

**Resolution:** The Corporation Board approved the Governance Development Plan 2024-27.

### **13 Board Succession Plan 2024-27**

Members received and considered the proposed Board Succession Plan 2024-26. Members noted that the Succession Plan 2024-26 had been updated to reflect forthcoming changes to membership during the academic year 2024/25. Members were reminded that the Board Succession Plan 2023-25 was approved by the Corporation Board in the Autumn term 2023. Members noted that all planned actions for the 2023-24 academic year had been completed. Members noted the planned actions for the 2024/25 academic year. The Clerk confirmed that governor aspirations were discussed as part of the governor annual review process in the summer term 2024.

**Resolution:** The Corporation Board approved the Board Succession Plan 2024-26.

### **14 Code of Conduct for Corporation Members**

Members received and considered updates to the Code of Conduct for Corporation Members. Members noted that the Search and Governance Committee had reviewed the updates to the Code of Conduct for Corporation Members at its meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> September and recommend the updated Code of Conduct for Corporation Members to the Corporation Board for approval. Members agreed the updates to the Code of Conduct for Corporation Members were helpful and appropriate and adhere to sector guidance.

**Resolution:** The Corporation Board approved the updated Code of Conduct for Corporation Members.

### **15 Review of Confidential Minutes**

Members reviewed the schedule of confidential minutes of meetings held between August 2021 and July 2024. Members considered which minutes should be deemed no longer confidential and identified for publication. Members noted that the Search and Governance Committee had considered the schedule of confidential minutes at its meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and did not identify any minutes for release for publication.

**Resolution:** The Corporation Board approved the schedule of confidential minutes.

**16 Written Resolutions and Chair’s Actions**

Members noted the Chair’s actions and Written Resolutions which had been approved since the last Corporation Board meeting.

**17 Minutes of Committee Meetings:**

Members noted the draft minutes of the meeting of the Search and Governance Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

**18 Any Other Business**

There were no items of any other business.

*Note: Staff and Students left the meeting.*

**19 Confidential Minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

The confidential minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record.

**20 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Members noted that the next meeting of the Corporation Board is scheduled for Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024, North Lindsey College.

The meeting closed at 8.07 pm.

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

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

TABLE OF ACTIONS				
Date	Minute	Action	Responsibility	Date Due