

# Waltham Forest College



## THE CORPORATION OF WALTHAM FOREST COLLEGE

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 DECEMBER 2023

|                    |           |   |
|--------------------|-----------|---|
| Youness Abidou     | present   | Member, Vice Chair of the Corporation, Chair of F & R                   |
| Antoinette Beekye  | present   | Staff Member  |
| Paul Butler        | present   | Member, Chair of the Corporation, Safeguarding Champion                 |
| Omur Derelikoylu   | present   | Staff Member  |
| Michael Eichhorn   | apologies | Member, Chair of A & R  |
| Janet Gardner      | present   | Member, Principal & Chief Executive Member                              |
| Andrew Hall        | present   | Member, sustainability champion (via Teams)                             |
| Susannah Hume      | present   | Member, SEND Champion   |
| Remi Iyun          | apologies | Member  |
| Bryan Johnston     | present   | Member  |
| Alison Morris      | present   | Member, Vice Chair of the Corporation, Chair of C & Q, Careers Champion |
| Renatta Nzomono    | present   | Member  |
| Amir Seyyad        | apologies | Member  |
| Leon Smith         | present   | Member  |
| Gbeminiyi Soyinka  | present   | Member  |
| Sidonia Crisan     | apologies | Student Member  |
| Kwasi Owusu-Mensah | present   | Student Member  |

#### CLERK TO THE CORPORATION

Naomi Shoffman Director of Governance (DoGov)

#### IN ATTENDANCE

Elton D'Souza EBR Consultant  
Hassan Rizvi Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality (DPCQ)  
Abena Rodman -Tay Deputy Principal Finance & Resources (DPFR)  
Amir Ahmed Director of Services for Students (DoSS)  
Nadeem Khalifa Director of BIDU (DBIDU)  
Stella Hawkins Director of Curriculum  
Afzal Khan Consultant re land acquisition – for item recorded under minute 86.23.  
Jack McCabe Director of TLA (DoTLA) – via Teams

**Due to the Coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19) the Corporation agreed that meetings may be held using Teams videoconferencing as per the Waltham Forest College Instrument & Articles, Instrument 1 (g).**

### **76.23 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from the following members: Mr Eichhorn, Ms Iyun, Mr Seyyad and Ms Crisan.

### **77.23 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

The members of the Corporation confirmed that there were no other items on the agenda for the meeting in which they had a personal interest.

### **78.23 MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2023**

I. The Minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 9 November 2023, were agreed by the Corporation to be signed by the Chair as a true record.

II. The Corporation ratified the following items which had been approved via Chairs Actions:

- a. The T Level Equipment Tender Recommendation
- b. The Utilities Contract Update

### **79.23 MATTERS ARISING**

The DoGov went through the action list and confirmed that all had been completed in line with the agreed target date.

### **80.23 STUDENT GOVERNOR REPORT**

Mr Owusu-Mensah, the Student Governors, presented his report and highlighted the following:

- The Activities and Engagements offered for learners in Term 1
- The first Student Conference of the Academic year - the theme was 'Mental Health & Wellbeing' focusing on 'Coping with distressing events in the news and building emotional resilience'.
- Student Union Contributions and impact

The Chair congratulated the student Governors for his first report which was very welcome.

### **THE CORPORATION NOTED THE STUDENT GOVERNOR REPORT.**

### **81.23 PRINCIPAL'S COLLEGE REPORT**

The Principal presented her report and in the interest of time the Principal said she would take the report as read and highlighted the following key points:

- The Positive start to the year
- Pay and conditions – the Colleges commitment to retention recruitment and wellbeing
- College of sanctuary proposal to be discussed that this meeting
- Future film focus employer event
- Reputation and profile of the College
- The sharing good practice by working with a college that had a good Ofsted outcome

The Principal concluded by saying that the majority of the other points in her report are covered in more detail in the substantive items to be considered at this meeting.

The Vice Chair commended the College's good reputation and high profile demonstrated by the impressive list of fora that the Principal has been invited to sit on and the amount of representation from other senior members of the team and see the impact for the college.

#### **THE CORPORATION:**

- **NOTED THE STRONG QUALITY AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE FOR 2022/23**
- **MONITOR THE PROGRESS OF THE FINANCIAL SAVINGS ACTION PLAN TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF ENERGY COSTS**
- **APPROVE THE KPIS FOR 2023/24**

#### **82.23 SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT UPDATE AND REVISED POLICY**

The DoSS presented the Safeguarding and Prevent Report and highlighted the following points and work the team has been doing around these areas:

- Overall safeguarding referrals has increased, and the number of unique learners supported by the safeguarding team has increased by, in comparison to the previous year.
- The top 3 themes
- 95% learners stated that they felt safe in response to a QDP FE induction survey question.
- New ways of working with students – around trauma, asylum seekers, homelessness – and also, maybe doing similarly for staff.
- The Safeguarding audit outcome concluded Strong (no recommendations).
- The Safeguarding Policy last approved in September 2023 has been amended to reflect the new Home Visit Protocol – Governors reiterated their previous request that all changes to revised policies coming for Corporation approval should be tracked.

The members thanked the DoSS for the informative report and discussed/raised the following points:

The reasons for the increase in referrals, which is seen as positive, which are that students feel safe to report, the growth in learner numbers and in this climate of the general significant increase in mental health issues.

The additional resources put in place to cope with the increase in referrals and promote and support mental health.

The issue around some agencies not responding in a timely manner and the risk around the capacity of the Team, particular cohorts of learners and the general increase in teacher workload the referrals cause. It was agreed that the next paper will include the organisations WFC works with.

How the team is able to flex in terms of the different themes it works with- The DoSS said these ties in with the national context and we make sure the team has the knowledge around specialist subjects and gave some examples such as what is being done to help students with cost of living crisis.

#### **THE CORPORATION AGREED TO:**

- **NOTE THE SAFEGUARDING DATA TRENDS AND ACTIONS TAKEN TO MITIGATE RISKS.**
- **APPROVE THE AMENDMENTS TO THE SAFEGUARDING POLICY.**

*The DoSS withdrew from the meeting.*

#### **83.23 SUBCONTRACTING**

The DoBiDU presented the report and advised that all subcontractors 'activity is where we expect them to be for this time of the year and in line with what we saw last year. There are no issues with any of the subcontractors who are all tried and tested; all subcontracted provision is due for procurement next year.

A member asked whether we connect with other college to see how they work with subcontracts The DoBiDU said this happens as part of due diligence to some prior learning checks.

A discussion ensued around plans for the future re subcontracting. The team is looking at where the niches and other options in line with LSIP priorities and curriculum intent.

#### **THE CORPORATION:**

- **NOTED CURRENT SUBCONTRACTED ACTIVITY FOR THE YEAR 2023/2024 AS OF R04.**
- **NOTED THAT THE PROPORTION OF SUBCONTRACTED ACTIVITY BETWEEN PROVIDERS MAY VARY ACCORDING TO STAKEHOLDER DEMAND BUT IS UNLIKELY TO INCREASE IN ITS OVERALL VALUE FOR THE YEAR.**
- **NOTED THE MECHANISMS USED BY THE COLLEGE TO MONITOR AND SUPPORT THE QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE OF ALL SUBCONTRACTED ACTIVITIES.**

*The DoBIDU withdrew from the meeting.*

#### **84.23 COLLEGE OF SANCTUARY STATUS**

The DoCurr presented the report and provided the background, context, rationale and process to this proposal. If approved WFC will be the first London college to achieve this status. The DoCurr said that the College already meets a of the criteria that embodies this and went though what is in place and how that can be adapted to meet the requirements to achieve this status. A cross college working group will be set up to work through the process, and it is planned to bring this into the staff CPD sessions in January

A member suggested should this be awarded that we produce a sharp statement on what this status means on the College website. He also suggested a set of questions should be formulates and asked when new opportunities are being considered in terms of impact assessment and it was agreed this would be good practice.

A discussion ensued around the risk to and opportunities for the college if we do this.

#### **THE CORPORATION APPROVED THE PROPOSAL FOR THE COLLEGE TO EXPRESS INTEREST IN PURSUING THE AWARD AND TO START THE PROCESS TO BECOME A COLLEGE OF SANCTUARY**

*The DoCurr withdrew from the meeting.*

#### **85.23 A LEVELS AND GCSE PROPOSAL**

The DoTLA presented the report and discussed he proposal in line with the agreed strategy following on from the Governors' Strategy Day highlighted the following key points:

- The College is seeking to add a GCSE and A Level study programme to mitigate the changes caused by the qualification reforms.
- Two GCSE pathways will be offered. Only the most popular subjects will run if either cohort underrecruits.
- The A Level offer consists of facilitating subjects, and other subjects within the top 10 most chosen A Levels in London. Were looking to keep learners in borough who currently go out of Borough for A Level  
We believe this offer to be competitive.
- A minimum in-year investment of £46,855 will need to be made this academic year, which could rise to £116k depending on our staff recruitment strategy.
- There is a significant risk in not introducing new qualifications given qualification reforms are taking place around us, and there are several subjects set to be defunded for which there is not a T Level available.

The Chair of the C&Q Committee said the Committee had looked at this, but this paper has more details and covers the financial impact. The risks and how to mitigate some of the costs in worst case scenario were discussed. The Principal advised that if this is not viable the College won't run it, but this is being proposed to future proof the college. This is a key risk on our risk register which will be monitored on an ongoing basis as we go along.

The Chair of the C&Q Committee agreed that she can see the risk of not doing it. However, Governors may be uncomfortable agreeing to something that will make a loss. The Principal advised that the paper sets out worst case scenarios and it would be dangerous to model this on best case scenario. A discussion around the risks of adding this provision and the impact on financial performance, and how this may impact on the budget in 2024-25.

The Principal advised the Director of TLA to bring back more information to next corporation, but in the meantime would like to go ahead with promoting this. The governors said that they were conceptually in agreement but before making a financial investment would require more detailed information, which could be in the form of an additional addendum to this report.

The Chair of The C&Q Committee observed that this is a great paper from a C&Q point of review and as such is well worth doing it, but she would be more comfortable if we have the full data to hand. It was agreed that the Principal would circulate the additional information to all at the end of January to see if it can be agreed by email otherwise, we will convene an extra meeting.

#### **THE CORPORATION NOTED THE A LEVELS AND GCSE PROPOSAL AND AGREED THE ACTION AS ABOVE**

*The DoTLA withdrew from the meeting.*

#### **Minute 86.23 recorded under Part 2**

##### **87.23 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING ON 30 NOVEMBER 2023**

The Corporation received the draft minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting. The Vice Chair of the Committee reported on the items covered in the meeting, namely Financial Statements 2022/23, Internal Audit Service Annual Report 2022-23, Updated Internal Audit Plan 2022-23, Update on Internal Audit Recommendations, Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee 2021-22, College Risk Register, PI's for Auditors. The Vice Chair reported that as part of the discussion around the Committee's effectiveness the auditors had made the point that the work the Committee had carried out during the year particularly around risk management and risk appetite was outstanding and had gone above and beyond compared to other colleges. The Vice Chair concluded her report saying that as the majority of the above are substantive items at these meeting they do not need to be revisited.

#### **THE CORPORATION NOTED THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING**

##### **88.23 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2022-23**

The DPFR presented the following reports and documents which had been previously presented by the financial statements' auditors to and thoroughly scrutinised by the Board at the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

- The Financial Statements for 2022-23
- The Audit Findings Report
- The Regularity Audit Report
- The Letter of Representation

The final draft presented here incorporates the changes, and amendments agreed with the Financial Statements Auditors at that meeting. The annual accounts key highlights are:

- Financial Health: 'Outstanding'
- Surplus: £1,430k
- Cash Reserves: £13,868k
- Cash days: 195

#### **THE CORPORATION AGREED TO APPROVE:**

- **THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR 2022-23 AND THE AUDIT FINDINGS REPORT**
- **THE REGULARITY AUDIT REPORT**
- **THE LETTER OF REPRESENTATION**

##### **89.23 INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23**

The DPFR presented the Internal Audit Service Annual Report for 2022-23 and highlighted the following:

- The reviews give an “overall strong” assurance with one review giving “substantial” assurance.
- There were no high-grade audit recommendations or anything of concern. Most have been implemented with immediate effect but will be formally checked at the follow up review later this year.
- Benchmarking data overall shows the College is performing better than most comparable clients.

## **THE CORPORATION RECEIVED THE INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23**

### **90.23 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE 2022-23**

The DoGov presented the Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee 2022-23 which provides a summary of the Committee’s activities, the College’s Audit arrangement and assurance framework, Internal audit findings 2022/23 And the Financial Statements and Regularity audit findings 2022/23 and the Committee’s self assessment and evaluation of its effectiveness.

The DoGov advised that this report has been considered by the Audit and Risk Committee and recommended to the Corporation for approval.

## **THE CORPORATION APPROVED THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE’S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2022-23**

### **91.23 CURRICULUM AND QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING ON 28 NOVEMBER 2023**

The Corporation received the draft minutes of the Curriculum and Quality Committee meeting. The Chair of the Committee reported on the items covered and discussions at the meeting.

## **THE CORPORATION NOTED THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CURRICULUM AND QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING**

### **92.23 COLLEGE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT – SAR – 2022/23 AND QIP 23 /24**

The DPCQ provided a brief summary of the College Self- Assessment Report 2022/23(SAR) and Quality Improvement plan 23/24 (QIP) which had been presented to and recommended for approval by the Curriculum and Quality Committee, and highlighted the following:

- The ‘Overall Effectiveness’ is ‘Good’.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Waltham Forest College makes a strong contribution to meeting the skills needs.
- All Key judgements and judgements of provision types are ‘Good’.
- Leaders, managers and governors have a strong vision and direction for the College which is understood and supported by staff.
- The curriculum is coherently planned which prepares learners for their next stage of education and/or employment. As a result, 96% of study programme learners had positive destinations on completion of their study programme, overall, the positive destinations figure is 93%.
- Leaders adopted, developed, and implemented a curriculum that was ambitious, appropriately relevant to the local, regional and national skills needs and, as a result, had a positive impact on learner outcomes which are overall at 90.6% which is 7.0% above NR and 6.8% above Provider Group average.
- The areas requiring improvement which are detailed in the College QIP 2023-24 and ongoing actions.

A member thanked the DPCQ for including the progression to university data and asked about the links with them – The DPCQ went through the links and activities the College does in partnership.

Discussions ensued around:

- Where the College is in terms of quality and performance in the college
- The areas where there are some concerns.
- Ofsted outcomes in recent inspections.

Members agreed that the distance travelled is really strong and a credit to the DPCQ and the whole curriculum team.

**THE CORPORATION AGREED TO:**

- **VALIDATE THE KEY JUDGEMENTS AND APPROVE THE COLLEGE SAR 2022/23**
- **NOTE THE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR 2023/24**

**93.23 UPDATE ON CURRICULUM AND QUALITY**

The DPC&Q spoke to the Curriculum and Quality Report for Term 1 and highlighted the following:

- The College has had a positive start for learners for the academic year 2023-24.
- Study programme (16-18) enrolment is above allocation.
- attendance and punctuality rates, which requires improvement.
- An action plan to support GCSE English and maths learners is in place.
- The detailed analysis of the outcomes for 2022-23 GCSE Pass rate (16-18) and progression to HE
- Positive outcomes of the learners' survey
- CPD is positively received by the teaching colleagues, with the majority that it has improved their practice.

In response to a question the DPCQ explained the context of the progress rates and the interventions put in place to improve these. The Principal advised that it is quite a complex issue to address and that it was crucial to be able to evidence and demonstrate distance travelled; notwithstanding this she agreed the results are not yet good enough.

**THE CORPORATION NOTED THE PROGRESS ON THE KEY ASPECTS OF CURRICULUM AND QUALITY**

**94.23 FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING ON 5 DECEMBER 2023**

The Corporation received the draft minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee Meeting.

The Chair of the Committee reported on the items covered at the meeting and key points discussed the majority of which are substantive items on this agenda. He commended the amount of work that the finance team has put into planning the provision and savings for the increased energy costs.

**THE CORPORATION NOTED THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING**

*Mr Abidou left the meeting.*

**95.23 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2023-24 – MONTHLY MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS FOR 31 OCTOBER 2023**

The DPFR spoke to the Management Accounts to 31 October 2023. She highlighted the key points and progress against the financial plan and those issues that could impact on the college accounts.

A discussion ensued around T Levels, funding, claw back provision, the impact and implications of not running this, the type of learners this qualification would suit, the pathways being offered and the issues around them and what the AoC are saying about this. The Principal advised that WFC has tried comparing to other colleges, but T Levels are not being offered everywhere. WFC did ask to be paired with another institution who are doing this well but have had no response so far, but we would be happy to find a buddy college to work with. The DPFR advised she will need to take a view how to forecast for this provision when we have more information.

**THE CORPORATION:**

- **RECEIVED AND NOTED THE MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO 31 OCTOBER 2023 RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL POSITION OF WALTHAM FOREST COLLEGE.**
- **NOTED THE KEY FINANCIAL RISKS BEING MANAGED AND THE MITIGATING ACTIONS BEING TAKEN BY THE COLLEGE.**

**96.23 UPDATE ON PROGRESS WITH THE CAPITAL PROJECTS**

The DPFR presented the update on the following capital projects that the College is currently undergoing: The West Wing Project, T level capital project and Post 16 Capacity Funding. The DPFR advised that the Finance and Resources Committee had thoroughly reviewed the report and risks at their recent meeting.

**THE CORPORATION NOTED THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE FECTF PROGRAMME, T LEVEL CAPITAL PROJECT AND POST 16 CAPACITY PROJECTS.**

**97.23 HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE**

The Health and Safety update was presented for information.

**THE CORPORATION AGREED TO:**

- **NOTE THE CONTENTS OF HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE REPORT.**
- **NOTE THE KEY RISKS BEING MANAGED BY THE COLLEGE AND ACTIONS TAKEN.**

**98.23 REVIEW OF RISK REGISTER**

The DPFR presented the updated risk register. The key risks have already mostly been discussed at this meeting, but she highlighted the key top risks and went through the mitigation actions to address these. The Board was updated on the recent appointment of two interims covering finance and estates posts and curriculum.

The Chair observed that as all the risks had already been covered in discussions in the previous items, it was a positive indication that the RM framework is being embedded across the piece.

**THE CORPORATION NOTED THE RISK REGISTER AND THE MITIGATING ACTIONS BEING TAKEN.**

**99.23 SEARCH, GOVERNANCE AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE MEETING ON 5 DECEMBER 2023**

The Vice Chair Corporation received the draft minutes of the Search, Governance and Remuneration Committee meeting and having considered and discussed the recommendations within:

**THE CORPORATION AGREED TO APPROVE:**

- **THE RE-APPOINTMENT OF MR DESCHENES AS THE INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE**
- **THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REPORT**
- **THE GOVERNANCE ACTION PLAN 2023-24**

**100.23 ANY OTHER ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None

**101.23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Strategy Day – Saturday 9th March 2024

Corporation – Tuesday 26 March 2024

Corporation – Tuesday 9 July 2024

**Members of Staff left the meeting.**

**CORPORATION MEMBERS - REFLECTIONS ON MEETING** - A brief session ensued for corporation members to discuss their reflections on the meeting which were all positive.

**Staff Governors left the meeting.**

***Minutes 102.23 -104.23 recorded under Part 2***



*The meeting closed at 21:10*

| <b>These minutes have been approved by the Corporation as a correct record.</b> |  |
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| <b>CHAIR:</b><br><br>P Butler   | <b>DATE:</b><br><br>8 May 2024                                       |
|   | <b>REMOTE CONFIRMATION:</b><br><br><b>OR SIGNED:</b><br><br>P Butler |