

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON 18 JUNE 2024 AT 4.00 PM  
VIA MS TEAMS**

Present: Andrew Cochrane (Chair), Phil Dover, Narinder Sharma, Kevin Slack, Mandie Stravino.

In attendance: Jo Clifford, Heather Kelly, Ian McCormick  
Rose Matthews (Clerk to the Corporation)

**PART ONE - GENERAL MINUTES**

**58/23-24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Alan Brady, Andy Dymond, Stuart Ellis, Jack Ellis-Guthrie, Martyn Marples, Jane McNeil, Sue Bradley, Anju Virdee.

These had all given their approval via e-mail to the procurement request subject to the rest of the Board receiving satisfactory assurance on the questions raised ahead of the meeting.

**59/23-24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, CONFIRMATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND QUORUM**

All members were eligible, the meeting was not quorate, but absent Members had provided written support (as per minutes no x) and there were no new declarations.

**60/23-24 IT PROCUREMENT**

The Chair raised the Board’s discomfort at the short notice of the request for approval of IT procurement and that it was not raised at a scheduled meeting. He thanked those members able to attend at short notice.

The Director of IT presented his report which provided an update on recently completed procurement exercises to procure an installer for Immersive teaching rooms and to procure a hyper converged infrastructure for 3D VDI for the IoT and requested the Corporation award the contracts in line with the College Financial Regulations and Procurement Policy.

He explained the procurement was for a hybrid teaching space for the IoT and provided the opportunity for other areas of the College to teach from one space and have remote attendance. This will provided the opportunity for additional income from work based learning.

**The Chair asked if the two procurement exercises were related.** They were not.

**Narinder Sharma pointed out that some providers tie organisations in with licenses etc.** The Director of IT explained the College would pay for the licence and maintenance subscription. The more hours the College used the more income the Collee would bring in.

Action	Date

The CFO talked through the procurement framework. **Kevin Slack said he did speak to the CFO earlier in the day following the Audit Committee and had nothing further to add. Phil Dover was happy that the procurement process had been followed and he understood the need.**

**Narinder Sharma asked if they were a local firm and if it was a standard platform or a bespoke product.** The Director of IT responded that the system did not rely on standard global platforms, by they did monopolise the marketplace. This had been included in the LSIF bid and alternative products were looked at, but they had all been bought out of the marketplace by this company – they are a successful company. X20 were an American company and GVAV was the reseller for the UK based in the West Midlands. GVAV operate nationally and work for DCG regularly.

**Narinder asked if they were being used by other Colleges.** They were being used by Nottingham, Dudley, Birmingham Met. All framework suppliers were vetted through the framework. The CFO added that there would be kit supplied (such as screens on the wall etc.,) which could be repurposed, this was one of the risks working with software companies. If they were to cease trading, there would be other companies that would pick up their work.

The Chair went onto raise the questions flagged by other members unable to attend the meeting.

**Anju Virdee raised the financial risk of capital funding continuing post March 2025. Her thinking was influenced by the imminent election and any changes new government could make to the local skills arrangements – as the capital funding for the immersive teaching rooms was fully funded by the LSIF.** The CFO confirmed the money had got to be spent before that date, hence the urgency for approval.

**Andrew Cochrane asked if these were fixed prices in the sense that the risk of cost overrun lies with the supplier.** The Director of IT confirmed these were fixed costs.

**Martyn Marples raised there needed to be close monitoring of GVAV as it was the only tender received and asked for more feedback on their experience of delivery.** This had been covered earlier in the meeting, but GVAV are one of the only installers with trained specialists for this installation. They have carried out an install at Cardiff University recently and they are our regular AV specialist installers. DCG have been using them and appointing them through the NEUPC framework for over 5 years.

**Kevin Slack noted it was a fixed fee, but questioned if any training had been built in.** The Director of IT confirmed training had been built into the fixed fee cost.

**RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the responses and based on the written responses already received from absent Members approved the award of the contract to GVAV Limited via the NEUPC framework for the supply and install of the X2O One Room solution in accordance with the Further Competition, at a cost of £367,000.**

Members considered the second procurement request in relation to the Hyper Converged Infrastructure for 3D VDI solution for the Institute of Technology.

The Director of IT explained this was a high end graphics card, where a laptop or end device (be it mobile phone, ipad, anything) with a low spec could view high spec graphics. The benefit is this can be accessed remotely and supports with social mobility. This provided longer term sustainability, because if it was scaled up, the College would replace with serve graphics cards rather than on individual devices across the estate.

**Jane McNeil had raised in her absence – the College would be taking on trust that the technical assessment has been done well, so would want to know a bit more about that.** The Director of IT confirmed the College had been looking at the VDi for over two years and had in mind it would be more popular, but Nutanix had been the sector lead in term of innovation and VMware and Citrix were very expensive and had complex licensing models. In terms of quality the successful candidate only score marginally less than Dell on quality.

**Andrew Dymond questioned consideration around the supplier given the quality score was higher for the second highest scoring supplier.**

**The Chair expressed his caution in relation to reputation with the recommended supplier.** Dell would have come with their own system – which due diligence was carried out on and were significantly less on price, but slightly higher on the quality score. However, they would have come with a proprietary produce that would tie the College into their software. Nutanix did not tie the College into Fujitsu as long as it was certified hardware. This was a prescored framework and the rule of the framework was to go with the firsts ranked.

**The Chair asked if the costs were fixed.** The Director of IT confirmed they were.

**Kevin Slack asked if the College still had an ongoing relationship with Fujitsu.** The College did and branding was displayed across the sites. The College had prepared a statement in relation to Fujitsu, but it was pointed out the part the College dealt with was the produce and not the services – which was a separate part of the business. The SKT had debated the operational risk and it is a back office server, unlikely to be badged with Fujitsu on it.

**RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the award of contract to the first-ranked supplier, Fujitsu, via the SSSNA framework for Hyper Converged infrastructure for 3D VDI for the IoT, at a cost of £318,000.**

*The meeting finished at 4.31 pm*