



**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON 25 MARCH 2024  
AT 4.30 PM IN THE ENGINE ROOM, THE ROUNDHOUSE AND VIA MS TEAMS**

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Recorded incidents to date were shared, the majority were non-college related first aid incidents. Over half of those recorded incidents were in connection with land based provision, due to the high risk nature of activities there. Undesired circumstances and near misses have been reported demonstrating a good reporting culture.

H&S Mandatory training compliance was shared and an improvement noted from the last meeting due to follow up emails by HR. All H&S training modules had over 93% compliance.

The committee have approved an events management procedure which was agreed to be an appendix of the H&S Policy and disseminated via departmental team meetings to ensure all public events are approved, risk assessed, and management arrangements documented and communicated.

**The Chair of Governors was pleased to hear the gap had been narrowed in terms of mandatory training. He asked if there was any sector benchmarking statistics for that.** There was no benchmarking data to available. However, for DCG it is an improvement.

**RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the Health and Safety update and noted the improved position in terms of mandatory training.**

#### **38/23-24 SAFEGUARDING UPDATE**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead delivered a verbal report following the last SLT Safeguarding Committee in January (which Sue Bradley, the Link Governor attends).

The Safeguarding Policy and mandatory training had been reviewed to reflect recent organisational changes – these had received positive feedback in particular with regards to management of disclosures.

The number of safeguarding disclosures was shared, year to date this showed an increase on last year, with the majority of disclosures relating to mental health and wellbeing concerns. The total number of disclosures equated to 4% of all males in the College and 6% of all females, suggesting a good reporting culture.

An update was provided in relation to allegations made against staff and the outcome of these.

There had been no Prevent referrals submitted and no mandatory reports made regarding female genital mutilation (FGM).

**NS advised the health service had accepted the whole safeguarding/prevent agenda had not been as successful as it should and asked if there are any lessons the College could learn in terms of culture.** The DSL had previously worked at the health service and had attended a prevent workshop last week and the lack of referrals from the health service had been raised, as a health provider that remained their focus. The DSL had a link through that group in terms of learning and improvement.

**SE said he had picked up at the Audit Committee that the numbers looked higher and there was some debate around whether it was bad news or better reporting. He asked what good should look like and if the Board should be worried about the numbers.** AC said even if a benchmarking exercise was carried out the context of the College had to be

considered. SB said suggested there was continued challenge at SLT, but that the Board should continue to question to avoid complacency. The DSL was not aware of any safeguarding benchmarking information, but would be concerned if the College did not have a number of disclosures. Derby City looked at themes, such as domestic abuse, neglect etc and at the moment the College were following these trends, as in city schools and the health service.

**MM asked if DCG had objective referrals – if students thought it was a safe environment to make a referral.** The DSL said that was part of the student survey, when themes are picked up focus groups are arranged, along with focussed training for staff.

**PD said the level of referral depends on the culture of the organisation and he said he was not sure of the meaningfulness of benchmarking. The questions were pertinent in terms of the change in numbers and the Board should keep looking and questioning.**

**AD said the risk was not those that came forward, but those that don't. Things were moving in the right way and monitoring was being done. Unless there is another college in Derby of a similar size there would not be a similar answer.**

#### 39/23-24 STRATEGIC ENACTMENT

The Board received a strategic update from the Chair relating to the Duty to Review requirement to collaborate with other providers and discussions related to options where efficiencies could be made, or it may lead to a better experience for stakeholders in terms of the delivery of local skills needs.

Members discussed existing collaborations such as the IOT, LSIF project and collaborative work with employers and future options in relation to the IoT etc. The Chief Executive delivered a presentation on Devolution and the risks and opportunities associated with this.

The Board was satisfied that the College were actively involved in existing partnerships and collaborative working and were also exploring opportunities and working constructively with other stakeholders.

Challenges due to different funding streams and governance models impacted on the opportunities of some collaboration or indeed the appetite of others given the breadth of institutions covered by the duty. This would be discussed further at the July Board day in the context of the overall strategy review.

**MM referred to the CEO's presentation and asked if there was a need for adult evening classes.** The government agenda changed some years ago to supporting those already in the workforce, more recently adult funding has come back, and the College are trying to grow that provision, but with the skills crisis, DCG is struggling to recruit and retain teachers, and the majority of those need to support the 16-18 classroom provision and apprentices, which also provided a higher rate of funding.

Discussion took place with regards to the External Review of Governance which had been circulated to Corporation members following receipt of the final document. This would be discussed in more detail at the Board Day in July, along with the proposed action plan and progress towards.

The Chair had attended a recent AoC meeting and flagged some risks others were experiencing – strategic risk around building work and some colleges where it had gone wrong, and the threat of industrial action.

The Deputy Principal provided an update on English and maths and the government requirements now in terms of delivery hours for the qualifications. DCG were in a good position as they had always delivered a high number of contact hours. Strategies were being explored with regards to differential pay rates compared with schools, etc.

Corporation members received an overview of progress towards the development of the new strategy - with employer and staff consultation currently taking place and student consultation planned for March-April.

**RESOLVED: Members accepted the strategic update relating to the current and future strategy and noted the work being undertaken to drive the strategic direction of the organisation.**

DCG was among one of the first colleges to be awarded the College of Sanctuary Award in October 2020, which is due to be reviewed in October 2024. Members received an overview of the recognition, its requirements and the evidence it provided towards the award.

**RESOLVED: The Corporation received the training on the Award and agreed to submit the application to renew the award.**

#### **40/23-24 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND OPMR (INCLUDING KPIS)**

The Vice Principal – Quality of Education presented the latest Quality Improvement Plan and Organisational Performance Management Report which provided a summary of in-year performance against KPIs, structured around the EIF, and highlighted actions to secure improvement.

Since the last Curriculum Performance meeting the performance data had been published, which placed DCG well above the majority of regional colleges, and top in relation to disadvantaged students.

The VP went on to share headline performance from the NART tables published last Thursday which showed the College had improved by 10.1% on last year and were 6.4% above national average. However, the journey continued to improvement.

**The Chair praised the College for their hard work and the positive outcome.**

**MM said it was good to see improvement across the Board in the presentation and asked if rather than percentages if numbers could be included as to how many students it related to.** The VP explained the numbers were included in the full report in the agenda pack.

It was noted number were higher this year. **MM noted 75 learning walks had had yet to be submitted, he asked if that was an issue.** The VP said there was a 10 day period after the walks to respond and they were within this period.

**RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the report, progress to the KPIs and the Improvement Plan.**

## 41/23-24 GOVERNOR OVERSIGHT AND SCRUTINY SESSIONS

**Jane McNeil – EDI (10 January 2024)** – Jane had visited and met with KM and RB. She had been asked to consider the extent to link approaches for FE and HE in relation to EDI following on from the meeting with AD last term. The conclusion was there was such a difference in regulations it would not be possible to have the same approach.

**Sue Bradley – Safeguarding (16 January and 25 March 2024)** – Sue had met with the DSL and attended the last Safeguarding SLT, there was nothing to add to the report provided by the DSL presented earlier.

**Alan Brady – Academic (12 March 2024)** - the visit had commenced with a planned fire drill which was effective and efficient. Discussions related to, attendance (which was improving), outcomes – mock exam results (with the average grade already an improvement on last year) and how the different academes were getting along and the work underway on those that were underperforming.

**Andrew Cochran – Rolls Royce provision (25 March 2024)** – AC had already discussed his visit in the strategy enactment session earlier in the meeting.

**RESOLVED: The Corporation noted the reports from the Link and Lead Governor visits.**

## 42/23-24 STRATEGIC RISK REPORT, INCLUDING RISK REGSITER

The Chair of the Audit Committee presented the Strategic Risk Register which had been discussed and reviewed at the last Audit Committee meeting.

The key risks to highlight related to inflationary pressures and recruitment and retention. Litigation, prevent referrals and safeguarding incident updates were shared and there had been no reported instances of fraud.

Good progress had been made on the risk register around horizon scanning and the areas of risk, with specific presentations to the Committee on IT, cyber security and AI.

The Audit Chair also shared some risks highlighted at a recent event he had attended around the ONS reclassification, around signing off accounts in relation to going concern and ex gratia payments. HR litigation claims around the working time directive could also have implications.

**The Corporation Chair asked if there was any indication of cost in terms of the Working Time Regulation.** The CFO said provision had been made in terms of Brazel v Harper.

## 43/23-24 FINANCE REPORT

The CFO presented the mid-year financial review and management accounts for January 2024 – which included the KPIs.

A full reforecast exercise was completed at Period 4 and the current forecast had been updated to include a reassessment of risk and reflect the latest position.

The Management Accounts for January were positive with key changes to the full year forecast relating to the 16-18 growth funding received. The LSIF was now incorporated into the outturn. Core funding had been secured which provided some security for next year in terms of the right number of students.

The overall budget had moved from 'RI' to 'Good'.

The risks around the covenant remained and improvement to the EBITDA.

Members were asked to approve the procurement recommendations made from the Finance and Resources Committee relating to the T Level Hair and Beauty Works, Professional Construction Consultancy and Farm Vehicle leases.

**RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the contract for T Level Hair and Beauty be awarded to Davlyn Construction at an estimated contract value of £300,000 subject to final negotiations.**

**RESOLVED: The Corporation approved that a framework be established with four contractors for each specialism for a period of three years. The value of new major projects will be subject to separate overall approval and will generally be included as part of the annual budget setting process.**

**RESOLVED: The Corporation approved that the vehicles are leased by G&R Pykett Ltd with a whole life value of a three year lease with the option to extend for one year, at a value of £212,888. However further negotiations should be undertaken to ensure value for money.**

A review had been undertaken of the Tuition Fees Policy and this had been presented for approval with the key changes discussed.

**RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the Tuition Fee Policy.**

#### 44/23-24 **CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

No consent agenda items had been brought forward for discussion.

The Chair did discuss the proposed appointment of new members from the Search and Governance Committee.

**RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the recommendation from the Search and Governance Committee to appoint Anju Virdee and Richard Blackmore to the Board for an initial term of two years.**

The following items were recommended by the Committees for approval:

Higher Education Academic Board held on 6 March 2024:

Terms of Reference Review  
Higher Education Annual Review

**RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the updated Higher Education Board Terms of Reference and the Higher Education Annual Review.**

Audit Committee held on 12 March 2024:

Gender Pay Report

**RESOLVED:** The Corporation approved the Gender Pay Report recommended from the Audit Committee.

**RESOLVED:** The Corporation approved the following, the detail of which was discussed at the Search and Governance Committee meeting held on 21 March 2024:

**FE Code of Governance**

**Training Plan and Policy**

**Standing Orders**

**Scheme of Delegation**

**Board Recruitment, Appointment and Induction Policy and Procedure**

**Independence of the Governance Professional Policy**

**Code of Conduct.**

**RESOLVED:** The Corporation formally adopted the revised AoC Further Education Code of Governance. It was agreed to review in more detail at the Corporation Strategy Day.

*The meeting finished at 7.32 pm*