



North Kent College

Corporation Board

Part 1 Minutes (non-Confidential) of the meeting held on

Thursday 27 March 2025 at 17.30hrs held via Teams.

Members present:

Mr. D Gleed	Chief Executive Officer/Executive Principal
Mr D Martin	External Governor – Chair of Corporation
Mr. L Jones	External Governor – Vice Chair of Corporation
Mrs I Redman	External Governor
Mr T Biring	External Governor
Ms S Henwood	External Governor
Mr. R Ogefere	External Governor
Mr P MacGahan	External Governor
Dr S Hubble	External Governor
Ms H King	External Governor
Mr E Barry	Student Governor
Ms E Cosby	External Governor
Mr M Jenkins	External Governor
Ms J Spurgin	External Governor
Ms M Sahota	External Governor
Ms J Grant	External Governor
Mr D Higbee	Staff Governor
Mr R King	Staff Governor

Senior Leadership Members in attendance:

Mr L Jenkins	Deputy Chief Executive
Mr M Andrews	Deputy executive Principal/Strategy & Curriculum
Ms R Hughes	Deputy Executive/Teaching, Learning & Improvement
Ms K Francis	Director of People
Mrs Y Hughes	Clerk & Governance Advisor to the Board

Minute No:	Minute recorded	Action/ Decision
1018	Opening of Meeting and Apologies for Absence	
	<p>The Chair of Corporation – Mr Martin opened the meeting at 17.33 hrs and welcomed all present. It was noted for the record that Mr Martin Jenkins would be late joining the meeting all other members were present.</p> <p>The Chair formally welcomed Mr Ross King and Mr Darren Higbee the newly elected Staff Governors to their first Board meeting and Ms Kerrie Francis the Director of People for the College who had been invited to present the HR Reports to the Board.</p>	

1019	Corporation Board Appointments	
	<p>Mr King and Mr Higbee the elected new Staff Governors formally introduced themselves to the Board.</p> <p>Formally approved Mr Ross King was formally appointed as a Staff Governor for a two-year term of office effective as of 27th March 2025.</p> <p>Mr Darren Higbee was formally appointed as a Staff Governor for a two-year term of office effective as of 27th March 2025. Mr Higbee was also appointed as a member of the Quality & Standards Committee effective as of the 27th of March 2025.</p>	
17.39hrs	Mr Martin Jenkins joined the meeting	
1020	Declarations of Interest	
	There were no amendments or new declarations of interest declared other than those already registered and held on record. It was noted for the record that the two new staff governors had returned their completed forms to the Clerk.	
1021	Corporation Board Minutes – 12 December 2024	
	<p>The Corporation Board received the pre-circulated minutes of the meeting held on the 12 December 2024.</p> <p>Formally approved subject to the above amendments</p> <p>The Board formally approved Part 1 Corporation Board minutes of the meeting held on the 12 December 2024.</p> <p>The Board formally approved Part 2 Confidential Minutes of the meeting held 12 December 2024.</p> <p>The Board formally approved the Part 3 Strictly Confidential (Not for Staff & Student Governors or Public Record) Minutes of the meeting held 12 December 2024.</p> <p>The Board formally approved Part 4 Strictly Confidential (Not for SLT/Staff/Students or Public Record) Minutes of the meeting held 12 December 2024.</p>	Minutes Approved
1022	HR Report	
	<p>The Director of People presented the HR Report which encompassed an Annual HR Update, HR Metrics, Annual Gender Pay Gap Report and the Equal Pay Report for 2023/24, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy & Objectives and the College Redundancy Policy and Procedures.</p> <p>HR Report</p> <p>The Board received the HR Report and noted the positive aspects within the report particularly in respect of the improvement in staff retention which had a positive impact on recruitment challenges. The College had also seen an improvement in sickness leave and the collection of data in respect of special characteristics.</p> <p>Ms Redman referred to the sickness leave data and commented that although there was a marked improvement there was still a large proportion of sick and asked how this compared nationally. The Director of People</p>	

accepted the point made and added that the Association of Colleges had not undertaken a survey for some time and therefore benchmarking data was not available to compare the college data with other nationally. The comparative benchmarking data that had been included within report had been drawn from the CIPD which was at 7.8%.

Received

The Board received the HR Report as presented noting the improvements that had been made.

Gender Pay Gap Report

The Director of People presented the annual Gender Pay Gap Report and explained that the report had been produced in line with legislative requirements and would be published on the College's website as required by regulation, by 31 March 2025.

The report showed an improvement of 1.69% which was reduction in the gap between male and female pay to 14.15% in 2024 (previously 15.84% in 2023).

It was agreed that there was still room for improvement, and it was explained that the workforce composition was likely to remain a contributing factor to the gap, as pay comparisons include the most senior position, which was held by a male. The lowest pay quartile had the highest proportion of female employees (77%), and 40% of those employees were in roles where pay was linked to the National Minimum Wage. This included the Colleges commercial Nursery, where roles were held by female employees.

The Chief Executive commented that when looking at the Equal Pay Report for 2023/24 that gender pay was in fact very similar and that the equal pay report provided more meaningful data.

Mr Biring commented on the evident gap in the Gender Pay Gap report and it was agreed by SLT that in every instance there was a gap between the lowest and highest paid member of staff and that this was due to the workforce distribution and the fact that the college employed far more female employees compared to male.

The Chief Executive further added that when looking at the 200 colleges nationally that offered nursery provision on site, they would reflect similar trends and gaps due to the nature of staff employed within these specific areas. It was explained that if the College did not have the nursery facility that the gender pay gap would not reflect the gap. However, the equal pay report presented to the Board a much higher-level set of data which provided further clarity on the matter.

Approved

The Corporation Board formally approved the Annual Gender Pay Gap Report for 2023/24 noting the marginal improvement achieved.

Equal Pay Report

The Board received the Annual Equal Pay Report for 2023/2024 and noted that there were no significant pay differences for work of equal value. The report was produced alongside the Gender Pay Report, as of 31 August 2024, to assess any wider pay differentials and align with the College's commitment to EDI and associated regulatory compliance requirements.

	<p><i>Formally approved.</i></p> <p><i>The Board formally approved the Annual Equal Pay Report for 2023/24.</i></p> <p>Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and Objectives</p> <p>The Director for People presented the updated ED&I Policy & Procedures and the proposed Objectives for 2025/2029. It was noted that once the Board had approved the recommended document that the revised policy and approved objectives would be published on the College’s website to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Act 2010, specifically the Public Sector Equality Duty (“PSED”), which required setting at least one equality objective every four years. Subsequent approved annual progress reviews against these objectives will also be published on the College website.</p> <p>Ms Sahota referred to the ED&I objectives and asked how these would be monitored and measured. The Chief Executive referred to the tracking and analyzing of students which was done through the Annual College Self-Assessment Report, staff and student surveys, HR Metrics and explained that the three objectives would be undertaken through the college tutorials which would in turn be reported back to the Quality & Standards Committee for review and monitoring.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the ED&I objectives would be a public document, and governors asked whether the explanation provided by the Chief Executive above should be included in the document as a way of explanation on how these objectives would be monitored and measured. The Director of People explained that following implementation of the objectives that the Board would receive a detailed report in the 2024/25 HR report and an update would in turn be published.</p> <p>Governors welcomed the shift in language used in the reports which was very positive and formally thanked the Director of People for the work that had gone into producing the reports.</p> <p><i>Formally approve.</i></p> <p><i>The Board formally approves the updated Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy & Procedures and the Objectives for 2025/29 and looked forward to receiving the next annual report to see the progress that had been made.</i></p> <p>Redundancy Policy & Procedures</p> <p>The Director of People presented the updated Redundancy Policy & Procedures, and it was noted that only minor operational amendments had been made to the policy.</p> <p><i>Formally approved.</i></p> <p><i>The Board formally approved the updated Redundancy Policy & Procedures as presented.</i></p>	
18.11hrs	<i>Ms Francis – Director of People excused from the meeting.</i>	

1023	Chief Executive Report to March 2025	
	<p>The Chief Executive presented his report to March 2025 and stated that the report came in two parts as follows:</p> <p>Overview of Developments in the FE Sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 3 Pause and Review • £50m + £250m Budget Announcement • Curriculum and Assessment Review • New OFSTED framework (Draft) • Capital Funding • Kent FE Governors Conference - This will be held at the Maidstone Campus of Mid Kent College on Monday 9 June from 10am – 1pm. The Clerk & Governance Advisor to the Board would provide further details in due course and governors were asked to notify the clerk if they wished to attend. <p>Strategic Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directional Focus • Timeline <p>Part 1 – Overview of Developments in the FE Sector</p> <p>The Board discussed the report, and the pertinent updates provided particularly in respect of the Level 3 Pause and Review; Budget announcement and the new Ofsted Framework (draft). The Chair provided additional information in respect of the proposed new Ofsted gradings, and governors asked whether colleges had been involved in the consultation process, and it was explained that effectively colleges had not been consulted, and that the FE sector had been very limited in being able to feed into the consultation that was currently being undertaken.</p> <p>Governors referred to the budget announcement and asked what the impact of the new national insurance contributions would be, and the Deputy Chief Executive explained that it would be in the region of an additional £600k which the governors acknowledged would have a significant impact on college finances.</p> <p>Part 2 – Strategic Plan</p> <p>The Chief Executive referred to the update within his report on the work being conducted on the new Strategic Plan for 2025 and recapped on the discussions held at the governor’s strategy day. The Chief Executive asked for the Boards comments and input in respect of the 6 key themes that had emerged from the discussions as detailed below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identity and Purpose 2. External Engagement Expectations Exceeded 3. Staff Well Being at the Core of our Culture 4. Student Engagement and Enrichment – Beyond the Classroom 5. Inclusive Environment that removes Barriers 6. Excellence in Our Delivery, Outstanding in our Outcomes 	

	<p>The Chief Executive explained that the new strategic plan was very much an external facing document as opposed to the old one which had been an internal strategic plan as a result of the acquisition and the Grant Funding Agreement/Department for Education requirements.</p> <p>Ms Henwood referred to the strategy day discussions about the four campuses and where this fitted into the strategic plan. It was explained that it would be included in the first bullet point and further details would be included when the final strategic plan was presented to the Board for consideration and approval at the July 2025 board meeting.</p> <p>Ms Sahota commented on the new Strategic Risk Register that had been considered at the most recent Audit Committee meeting and on the agenda for board approval and whether the strategic plan had been taken into account within this document. The Chief Executive stated that the two documents actually served two different purposes and although they sat side by side that Strategic Plan was more about improvement.</p> <p>Mr Higbee asked about the Staff Wellbeing theme and the culture of the college and how seriously this particular objective featured in the overall strategic plan. The Chief Executive stated that this was of paramount importance for the board and that staff were a key focus.</p> <p>The Board agreed with the basis presented and looked forward to receiving the draft final document in July 2025.</p> <p><i>Board received.</i> <i>The Board accepted the report as presented noting the points raised.</i></p>	
1024	<p>Finance & Resources – Part 2 Confidential Business – Not for public record – Commercially Sensitive Monthly Management Accounts – February 2025 & 2nd Financial Forecast for 2024/25 Q2 Forecast</p>	
1025	<p>Strategic Risk Register</p>	
	<p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the new Strategic Risk Register as considered at the recent Audit Committee. The Board noted that the new Strategic Risk Register was a much-refined document and reflected on the discussions held at the governor strategy day taking account of internal and external factors.</p> <p>Members of the Audit Committee provided additional feedback on the draft Strategic Risk Register and stated that they were very supportive in making formal recommendation to the Board for approval of the document.</p> <p>The Board were advised that the risk register had been generated around 7 key areas with 18 points and risk controls set around this for on-going monitoring.</p> <p><i>Approved</i> <i>The Board welcomed the new Strategic Risk Register and formally approved the document.</i></p>	

1026	Annual Fees Policy 2025/26	
	<p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the following policies for annual review and Board approval.</p> <p>Annual Fees Policy Tuition Fees and Compensation Policy Residential Fees Policy</p> <p>Approved The Board formally approved the above policies for the 2025/26 period.</p>	
1027	Confidential Part 2 Business – Commercially Sensitive National Centre for Reptile Welfare Lease	
1028	Committee Report – Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held 13 March 2025	
	<p>The Corporation Board received the draft minutes of the last Audit Committee meeting held on the 13 March 2025.</p>	
1029	Committee Report Search Governance & Remuneration Committee minutes of the meeting held 6 March 2025	
	<p>Ms Henwood – Chair of the Search, Governance & Remuneration Committee presented the draft minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2025.</p> <p>Board Membership</p> <p>Ms Henwood informed the Board that the committee had considered future recruitment strategies and that it was determined that focus would be on seeking a candidate relevant expertise lined up with the provision at Hadlow College.</p> <p>The committee had also considered the upcoming governors who would be reaching the end of their first/second term of office.</p> <p>Mr Biring – it was noted that Mr Biring would be reaching the end of his second term of office as a board member at the end of July 2025 and after careful consideration the recommendation to the board was that Mr Biring be re-appointed on the basis that his skills and expertise in respect of the work of the Estates Strategy & Capital Projects Committee was vital particularly in light of the ongoing Dartford Land Disposal project.</p> <p>It was proposed that Mr Biring be re-appointed under exceptional circumstances as permitted with the Corporation Board Standing Orders for a further one-year term of office to terminate on the 31 July 2026.</p> <p>Formally approved</p>	

The Board formally approved and wholly supported the recommendation to reappoint Mr Biring for a further 1-year term of office to 31 July 2026.

It was further noted that Dr Sue Hubble, Ms Sarah Henman and Mr Louis Jones would reach the end of their term of office in the Autumn and that formal recommendation would be made to the Board for reappointment at the July 2025 board meeting.

Co-opted Governor – Keith Norman

The Board were informed that Mr Norman has originally been appointed as a co-opted member of the Estates Strategy & Capital Projects Committee of which this term was due to end on the 6th of May 2025. It was recommended that Mr Norman be reappointed for a further 1-year term of office as a Co-opted member with full voting rights to May 2026.

Formally approve

The Board formally approved the reappointment of Mr Keith Norman as a Co-opted Member of the Estates Strategy & Capital Projects Committee to May 2026.

Committee Membership & Additional Roles/Responsibilities

Formally approved

The Board formally approved the appointment of Mr Darren Higbee as a member of the Quality & Standards Committee as of 27th March 2025.

Ms Jane Spurgin appointed as the Link Governor for Tonbridge Campus

Dr Hubble the appointed Careers Link Governor reported that she had been in this role for a year now and had found it very useful and informative and had recently attended the College Careers Fair which had been excellent and strongly encouraged other governors to take the roles that were still vacant.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Higher Needs

Mandatory Training

Governors were thanked for their co-operation in ensuring training was completed and asked to continue to ensure that all mandatory training was kept up to date.

Meeting Survey

Following a survey conducted to gauge the views of all governors on the current meeting structure it was determined based on the overall feedback that the Board give due consideration to holding one Board and one Committee meeting in person on an annual basis.

Received

	<i>The Board received the minutes of the Search, Governance & Remuneration Committee meeting held 6th March 2025.</i>	
1030	Governance Internal Self-Assessment for 2025/26	
	<p>Ms Henwood presented the draft and newly revised approach to the Internal Governance Self-Assessment exercise to be undertaken for 2024/25 and recommended the documents for Board approval.</p> <p>The Clerk & Governance Advisor to the Board had conducted a complete review and re-drafted the following governance documentation to enable the Board and its Committee to undertake an extensive review during the 2024/25 period.</p> <p>The exercise would include Individual Governor Reviews, Chair of Corporation Performance Review, Committee Self Assessments and a whole Board self-assessment.</p> <p>Whole Board Self-Assessment Questionnaire This document has been drafted to include the AoC Code of Good Governance which will hopefully avoid duplication by having to complete both forms.</p> <p>Action and way forward - Proposed that the Clerk will populate the document and share with all governors via email for their input and any additional commentary/observations by no later than end May 2025.</p> <p>Committee Self-Assessment Questionnaires</p> <p>Action and way forward - It is proposed that the Clerk will populate the respective committee assessment form and arrange for a meeting with the respective committee chair in the first instance and then followed up with discussions at the next available committee meeting.</p> <p>Individual Governor Performance Reviews – 1:1 meeting to be arranged with CoC</p> <p>Action required by all Board members & Chair of Corporation - All governors will be asked to complete their own individual forms via Microsoft Forms and arrange a 1:1 meeting with David Martin as Chair of Corporation to discuss any issues. Clerk to liaise with all governors to arrange mutually convenient 1:1 meeting with the Chair of Corporation commencing at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>Chair to draft a summary report of findings.</p> <p>Chair of Corporation Performance Review – Led by Vice Chair of Corporation</p> <p>Action required by Board members and members of SLT to complete the draft form using Microsoft Forms (anonymously). The responses will be shared with Louis Jones as Vice Chair of Corporation who will be asked to prepare a summary of all findings and share these with the CoC.</p>	

	<i>Formally approved</i> <i>The Board formally approved the proposed approach to the Internal Governance Self-Assessment exercise for the 2024/25 period.</i>	
1031	Quality & Standards Committee Report – Minutes of the meeting held 11 March 2025	
	Mr Martin – Chair of the Quality & Standards Committee presented the minutes of the meeting held on the 11 th of March 2025. Received The Board received the minutes of the last meeting for monitoring purposes.	
1032	Quality Improvement Plans	
	<i>Received</i> <i>The Board received the updated Quality Improvement Plans for Department A, B, C and Hadlow College and Department D as reviewed by the Quality & Standards Committee.</i>	
1033	Annual Compliments & Complaints Report for 2023/24	
	<i>Received</i> <i>The Board received the Annual Compliments & Complaints Report for 2023/24 as reviewed by the Quality & Standards Committee.</i>	
1034	Confidential Part 2 Business – Commercially Sensitive Committee Report Estates Strategy & Capital Projects Committee minutes of the meeting held 6 February 2025 and 18th March 2025	
1035	Any other Business	
	Governors were reminded of the upcoming ICE Visit and Governor Development Session due to take place on Tuesday 13 May 2025 at Hadlow College. It was noted that following a survey conducted that 4 topics had been identified by governors for the development session as detailed below. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding the Culture, Character and Community of each campus 2. What are the biggest challenges facing the College Estate over the next 10 years 3. KENT FE – What the 3-way partnership does? 4. Mental Health Challenges and the NKC approach 	
1036	Date & Time of the next meeting	
	Meeting closed at 19.38rs. The next Corporation Board meeting was scheduled for the 22 May 2025 at 17.30hrs.	

	Meeting closed at 19.41hrs	
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