

**EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION**

**CORPORATION BOARD**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 7 July 2023 in the Boardroom, Hele Road, Exeter**

<b>Present</b>	Glenn Woodcock John Laramy Sangaralingam Ahilan Graham Atkins Emma Bradshaw-Smith Sue Clarke Pamela DeGregorio Neil Hitchings Rob Hutchins Carol McCormack Stewart Noakes Victoria Roberts Cynthia Sedgman Lindsay Skinner Patrick Tigwell Zakia Volshenk Sally Wolkowski	Vice Chair Principal/CEO
<b>Observers</b>	None	
<b>Apologies</b>	Sarah Brampton Bindu Arjoon Tim Quine	Chair
<b>In Attendance</b>	Rob Bosworth Jade Otty John Dowell <i>To item 5.2</i> Steve Strang Alison Layton-Hill	Deputy Principal/CEO Vice Principal Executive Director of Finance Executive Director of Estates and IT Head of Governance

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|----|---|---------------|
| 0. | <b>Tour of the Baker Building</b><br>Governors undertook a tour of the Baker Building to inform discussion at item 5.2  | <b>Action</b> |
| 1. | <b>Welcome and Apologies</b><br>In the absence of the Chair of the Corporation, Glenn Woodcock chaired the meeting. The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting and the Board noted apologies from Bindu Arjoon, Sarah Brampton and Tim Quine. |               |

On behalf of the Board the Chair offered a particular welcome to Graham Atkins, Cynthia Sedgman and Lindsay Skinner to their first Board meeting.

The Board noted that this would be the final meeting for the student governors, Zakia Volschenk and Sangaralingam Ahilan. The Chair thanked them for undertaking a crucial role and wished them well for their futures.

Although Sarah Brampton was not able to attend the meeting, the Chair acknowledged that this would have been Sarah's final Board meeting. Sarah has been an excellent governor and in particular a very effective Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

The Chair advised the Board that this would be Emma Bradshaw-Smith's final meeting having served as a governor for twelve years. During her tenure, Emma had undertaken a number of senior governor roles as well as acting as the lead governor for Safeguarding and for Health and Safety. On behalf of the Board, the Chair warmly thanked Emma for her highly valued contribution and unswerving support to the College.

The Chair reflected that there were a number of new governors on the Board and took the opportunity to convey the importance of governors owning and anchoring the future direction of the College as well as challenging the Executive in a respectful and independent way.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Glenn Woodcock, Member of Council at the University of Exeter, declared an interest in item 8.3 and did not vote on this decision.

Carol McCormack, Partner Michelmores, declared an interest in any items relating to Michelmores.

John Laramy, Principal/CEO declared an interest in any items relating to Pearson.

## **2. Minutes of Meetings**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2023, as circulated, were agreed.
- 2.2 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2023, as circulated, were agreed.
- 2.3 The restricted minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2023, circulated prior to the meeting, were agreed.

3. **Matters Arising**

3.1 Quality and Resources Reviews

Neil Hitchings and Sally Wolkowski had attended the quality and resources review process and updated the Board on their experience. They reflected that faculties came to the reviews well prepared and that the relationship between faculty heads and the leadership team was supportive. The experience had been helpful and an example of good challenge.

4. **Corporation Chair's Oral Report**

In the absence of the Chair, the Head of Governance delivered the Corporation Chair's oral report.

The Chair particularly highlighted the impressive student fashion show which was an excellent example of student and staff passion and creativity across various faculties. She had also attended the Michael Caines Academy ten-year anniversary celebration event. She extended her thanks to Michael Caines and Rob Bosworth for establishing and ensuring the continued high standards of the academy.

Referring to the Board Residential, the Chair thanked everyone for their contribution and set out the proposed timescale and governor touch points in terms of developing the new Strategic Plan. Lucinda Sanders (Director of Adult and HE), Katie Wilde (Head of Media and Performing Arts) and Dave O'Connor (Head of Construction and the Built Environment) will be the staff leads, ably supported by Sally Wolkowski and Rob Hutchins on behalf of the Board.

The Chair acknowledged a hugely successful academic year and thanked all staff and governors for their continued commitment.

**The Board noted the report**

5. **Strategic Matters for Discussion**

5.1 Principal's Strategic Report

This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.

The Rt. Hon. Robert Halfon MP, Minister for Education joined the Board meeting briefly and took questions from governors.

5.2 Capital and Estates Development

This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.

5.3 Meeting the Skills Need of the locality

The Board received the confidential LSIP jointly led by Devon & Plymouth and Somerset Chambers of Commerce. The Devon Colleges Group brochure

was also received which shows how provision is mapped across the four colleges.

The Board has a responsibility to ensure that the College is delivering the actions linked to the LSIP and monitoring that quality to ensure it is meeting local need. The accountability agreement links into the LSIP and the DfE will seek evidence that the College is meeting local need in the annual review meeting. The Board will receive assurance through the regular skills update. It was suggested that this reassurance is received at committee level through the ARC documents which will triangulate back into the accountability agreement.

Governors questioned whether the high number of small businesses regionally has a negative impact on the apprenticeship provision. It was noted that 99.6% of employers across Devon are SMEs. The College works with over 2000 employers, most of whom are SMEs, and the apprenticeship provision is strong.

The Board agreed to receive a flow chart detailing the assurance process at the next Board meeting and to discuss the College's role in filling local skills gaps. **JL**

**The Board noted the report**

**6. Learner and Student Voice update**

**6.1 College News**

The report was received and taken as read. Although impressed that a student had become a Model for Gucci, the Board sought and received reassurance that the College had provided objective support during a meeting with the learner and her parents.

**The Board noted the report**

**6.2 Learner and Student Voice Report**

The report was received and taken as read.

**The Board noted the report**

**6.3 Student Governor Reports**

The Board received the positive reports provided by the student governors. The student governors thanked the College for the privilege of serving on the Board and the opportunity to be part of the Board's work. Their experience had given them confidence that governors take the feedback from learners and the success of the College seriously. The student governors also gave positive feedback about the training they had received for their role.

**The Board noted the reports**

## **Part 2 REPORTS FOR NOTING/APPROVAL**

### **7. Recommendations from Audit and Risk Assurance Committee**

7.1 Executive Summary from Committee meeting on 5 June 2023  
The report summarising the key issues considered at the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee held on 5 June 2023 was received and the Committee Vice Chair highlighted the key issues.

The Committee had received deep dives into two linked risks; R69, failure to recruit 16-18 learners for 2023/2024 and R6, new and increased competition from schools with sixth forms and neighbouring colleges. The Vice Chair encouraged governors to attend the deep dive sessions.

#### 7.2 Risk Register

The Board considered the risk register, which had been scrutinised by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 5 June. It was suggested that a new risk is added to cover the discussion at item 5.3.

**JD**

#### **The Board approved the Risk Register**

#### 7.3 Post 16 Audit Code of Practice

The Board considered the report detailing the changes made in April 2023 to the Post 16 Audit Code of Practice. The revisions mostly reflected the transition of colleges into the public sector.

#### **The Board agreed to adopt the Post 16 Audit Code of Practice**

#### 7.4 External Audit Strategy 2022/2023

The Board received the External Audit Strategy for the preparation of the financial statements for the current year. The increase in fees was noted, in part due to additional work related to the subsidiary.

#### **The Board approved the External Audit Strategy for 2022/2023**

#### 7.5 Internal Audit Service re-appointment 2023/2024

The Board received the Committee's recommendation to re-appoint Tiaa as the internal auditors for the following year. It was confirmed that external specialist organisations would be used where appropriate.

#### **The Board approved the reappointment of Tiaa as the internal auditor for 2023/2024**

#### 7.6 Internal Audit Programme 2023/2024

The Board received the internal audit programme for 2023/2024.

#### **The Board approved the internal audit programme for 2023/2024**

8. **Recommendations from Business Services Committee**

8.1 Executive Summary from Committee meeting on 12 June 2023.  
The report summarising the key issues considered by the Business Services Committee meeting held on 12 June 2023 was received.

8.2 Exeter College Provisional Budget 2023/2024  
This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.

8.3 Exeter College Services Ltd Provisional Budget 2023/2024  
This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.

9. **Recommendations from Quality and Standards Committee**

9.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 19 June 2023.  
The report summarising the key issues considered by the Quality and Standards Committee meeting held on 19 June 2023 was received.

The Committee Chair shared her experience of attending the registration of asylum seekers at the College. The College had actively sought out these young people at their temporary accommodation, found them appropriate courses and welcomed them with chrome books and learner lanyards. The Board thanked the staff for their superb work to support these vulnerable young people.

The Committee had received a presentation related to the quality cycle and noted the shift in emphasis, which retained an unrelenting focus on quality.

The Board noted that the rate of completion for the student on course survey was very high and governors were encouraged to read the outcomes of the survey.

10. **Recommendations from Search and Governance Committee**

10.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 27 March 2023 and subsequent written resolutions.

**On the recommendation of the Committee, the Board approved:**

- a) the appointment of Ashish Ghadiali as a co-opted governor to serve on the Quality and Standards Committee as from 1 September 2023.**
- b) the appointment of Carol McCormack as Chair of the Remuneration Committee as from 1 August 2023**
- c) the appointment of Patrick Tigwell as Vice Chair of the Remuneration Committee as from 1 August 2023**
- d) the appointment of Tim Quine as Vice Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee as from 1 August 2023**
- e) the appointment of Neil Hitchings as Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee with effect from 9 October 2023**

**f) the appointment of Rob Hutchins as Vice Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee with effect from 9 October 2023**

- 10.2 Committee Membership  
The Board received the proposed committee membership for the year 2023/2024.

**The Board approved the committee membership for the 2023/2024**

11. **Board Self-Evaluation**

The Board considered its performance and effectiveness over the previous twelve months. Governors were encouraged to give careful thought to how the Board can improve its effectiveness and to let the Head of Governance have additional comments for the self-evaluation by email.

**All**

**The Board agreed to receive an updated self-evaluation for approval at the Board meeting in October 2023.** HofG

**PART 3: REPORTS AND MINUTES FOR INFORMATION**

12. **Reports**

The following reports were **received and noted.**

- 12.1 Student On Course Survey
- 12.2 HE Student Voice
- 12.3 ESFA Financial Health Score
- 12.4 ESFA Financial Dashboard
- 12.5 Summer Newsletter from the FE Commissioner
- 12.6 Governance/Sealings Report
- 12.7 Learner thank you letters

13. **Dates of scheduled meetings for 2021/2022**

Friday 13 October 2023  
Friday 8 December 2023  
Friday 19 April 2024  
Friday 5 July 2024

14. **Any other business**

The Board enjoyed a video covering the College highlights over the 2022/2023 academic year.

Signed by Chair:



Date: 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023