

## Notes of the Corporation Development Event held on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at 11:00 in Conference Room 1, Broadway

Members Present: Ian Austin (Teams – items 5, 6 and 7)  
Wendy Davies  
Ana Ferreira  
Nirmal Gupta  
Paul Hartridge  
Paul Noon (Chair)  
Jason Parker  
Jack Stokes  
Neil Thomas (Chief Executive & Principal) (CEP)  
Sarah Wood

In Attendance: Susanne Davies (Director of IoT and Partnerships)  
Gill Darwood (Director of Corporate Governance) (DCG)  
Debbie Goode (Executive Director Public Affairs and Marketing)  
Steve Johnson (Executive Director of Estates & Capital Projects)  
Kathryn Jones (Director of Human Resources)  
Louise Jones (Chief Finance Officer)  
Rebecca Durber (AoC) (Teams - item 5 only)

### 1 **Apologies for absence and confirmation of quorum**

1.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Liam Butler, Valerie Little, Liz Sithole, Matthew Collins and Diana Martin.

### 2 **Declarations of interest**

2.1 There were no declarations of interest relating to matters on the agenda.

### 3 **Chair's welcome**

3.1 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

## Student and staff engagement

### 4 **Tour of new facilities - Animal Science and Evolve**

4.1 Members undertook a tour of newly developed facilities in Animal Science and Evolve, meeting with learners and students who were using the facilities.

## Strategic matters

### 5 **Sector update**

5.1 Rebecca Durber, AoC Senior Policy Lead for Skills and Devolution joined the meeting via Teams to deliver a presentation which covered:

- Political context since the election in July 2024.
- Approach of the new government.
- A range of decisions made relating to Skills England, curriculum reform, pay, in-year growth funding, Ofsted inspection and other funding decisions.
- Operational priorities: immediate, medium term, longer term.
- Up-coming matters including budget, comprehensive spending review.
- Legislation on employment rights, devolution, Skills England.

- Manifesto pledges on skills and growth.
- AoC Conference 12-13 November.

- 5.2 She advised that the AoC budget submission would cover a range of key issues:
- College workforce (pay)
  - Young people demographic growth and youth guarantee.
  - Opportunity mission – adult ESOL, literacy, numeracy, outreach, lower level skills, progression.
  - Economic growth mission – delivery industrial strategy, level 3 to 5+, apprenticeships.
  - A more effective system – VAT, LGPS guarantee capital funding.
- 5.3 Considerations for those in governance included:
- The need to use time wisely.
  - Governing body decision making.
  - Collaboration.
- 5.4 Following her presentation, members were invited to comment or ask questions. The CEP noted that there were currently many uncertainties which had been highlighted in the presentation. In relation to timescales, R Durber noted that Government had committed to a rapid process in relation to the ‘pause and review’ on curriculum reform, but this would not be sufficiently rapid to help colleges in their curriculum planning for next year with prospectuses already in print in preparation for forthcoming open days. She felt that there was an opportunity for colleges to influence a number of the matters outlined.
- 5.5 I Austin noted that he found the briefings from AoC in parliament very helpful, and noted that Jacqui Smith the new Minister for Skills was from the Midlands and therefore it would be helpful to invite her to visit the college.
- 5.6 In relation to Skills England, R Durber explained that this would encompass employers, majors and other representative bodies. It would be part of a more joined up approach to skills, encompassing FE and HE.
- 5.7 It was noted that ESFA would be merged back into DfE over the coming months, but it was not felt that this would impact day to day operations and should make things easier in terms of decision-making responsibilities.

*R Durber left the meeting.*

- 6 **Confidential – Update on TTPL/Black Country & Marches Institute of Technology**  
*This matter is the subject of a separate and confidential minute.*
- 7 **Confidential - Update on Health Innovation Dudley**  
*This matter is the subject of a separate and confidential minute.*

**8 Governor strategic link activities 2024/25**

8.1 The DCG presented the proposed links for the year, which aimed to keep members aligned to the areas covered in the previous year for consistency:

<i>Role</i>	<i>Governor</i>	<i>SLG Lead</i>
Careers (to include personal development)	Wendy Davies Matthew Collins	D Goode
Equality Diversity and Inclusion	Nirmal Gupta Ana Ferreira	K Jones
SEND/Mental health and wellbeing	Paul Noon	L Glazzard
Estates Strategy/ Health and Safety/ Sustainability	Jason Parker Tom Westley Sarah Wood	S Johnson
Risk management, IT/Digital/Cybersecurity	Liam Butler Jason Parker	L Jones
Dudley Learning Quarter – quality of education	Jack Stokes Valerie Little Paul Hartridge	S Jocelyn-Spears/ R Corns
Brierley Hill Learning Quarter – quality of education	Liz Sithole Ian Austin	L Glazzard/ C Millard
Safeguarding lead governor (Not present at the meeting, but plans in place for handover on expiry of V Little’s term.	Valerie Little Matthew Collins	Diana Martin

8.2 Members worked in groups with their respective SLG lead to agree a timetable for visits for the coming year, and to identify topics and areas to explore. [SLG members were asked to feed back any comments and the agreed dates for engagement activities to the CEP and DCG.](#)

**Matters for approval**

**9 Succession planning and membership update**

9.1 The DCG provided members with an update on current membership and succession planning which included:

- Constitution of the Corporation as set out in the Instrument and Articles, and the current make up as per the Standing Orders.
- It was possible to amend the Standing Orders to increase membership up to the maximum number of members set within the Instrument and Articles. The Instrument and Articles set a maximum of 20 members, to include up to 16 external members.
- The Corporation currently included 11 independent members, 2 staff, 1 student and the CEP.
- Ian Austin and Wendy Davies were due to complete their first term of office on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2024. Both had agreed to be considered for a second term of office, and members agreed that both should be re-appointed.
- There was currently 1 vacancy for an independent member and 1 for a student member to reach the numbers set currently within the Standing Orders.

- Valerie Little’s second term of office was due to end in December 2024 which would give rise to an additional vacancy for an independent member.
- Search Committee would be meeting two potential new members on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, with a background in Healthcare, which had been identified as a skills gap on the current membership.

- 9.2 A number of roles were also required to be filled from the membership:
- Vice chair of the Corporation (to hand over from L Butler as soon as possible).
  - Member of audit committee (existing vacancy)
  - Member of standards committee (from December)
  - Members of search committee (two vacancies from December)
  - Member of remuneration committee (from December)

- 9.3 The DCG noted that there were certain restrictions on membership of committees:
- Members of Audit Committee could not be a staff governor or member of Finance & Estates Committee.
  - Members of remuneration committee could not be staff or student governors.

- 9.4 Members discussed the commitment involved in the vice chair role, and the Chair and DCG provided further details of what this would involve. Whilst it was ideal to have a succession plan for vice chair to move into the Chair role, due to the relatively new appointment of the Chair, this would not be essential for anyone who may be able to take on the role at the present time. The aim would then be at some point in the future to appoint an aspiring chair to take on the role of vice chair in preparation for handover from the current chair towards the end of his term of office.

- 9.5 It was agreed that the DCG would circulate a follow up survey to gain feedback from members on their willingness to be considered for the current vacancies. This would then be considered further by search committee.

- 9.6 **It was resolved** to approve the re-appointment of Wendy Davies and Lord Ian Austin for a second term of office commencing on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

## 10 **Any Other Business**

- 10.1 There were no items of other business.

## 11 **Date of next meeting**

- 11.1 The next meeting of the Corporation would be held on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 16.30 hours.

The meeting closed at 14.33 hours.

*Approved by Corporation Members at the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024.*