

THE CORPORATION BOARD OF EAST SURREY COLLEGE

OPEN MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 24 MARCH 2022

Meeting held in Auditorium, East Surrey College, Redhill

Meeting commenced: 18.00hrs

Meeting ended: 19.45hrs

Present

Andrew Baird	Independent Member	Chair
Liz Rushton	Independent Member	Vice Chair (attending remotely)
Jayne Dickinson	Chief Executive	
Derek Galloway	Independent Member	
Phillip Kerle	Independent Member	
Ganesh Kumar	Independent Member	
Colin Monk	Independent Member	
Alex Hayman	Independent Member	
Grace Marriott	Independent Member	
Anne Smith	Independent Member	
Lily Franklin	ESC Staff Member	
Jhalak Limbachia	ESC Student Member	
Elizabeth Konan	JRC Student Member	

Apologies for absence

Simon Bland	Independent Member
Bob Pickles	Independent Member
Simon Potten	Independent Member
Natalie Watkins-Khan	JRC Staff Member

In attendance

Jyoti Baker	Chief Operating Officer
James Marshall	External Co-opted Member of the Audit Committee
Lindsay Pamphilon	Principal
Eva Dixon	Chief Operating Officer designate
Emily Russell	JRC Student Member designate
Mitzi Gibson	Executive Director HR

Clerk

Sue Glover	Director of Governance
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C.01.22 Declaration of Interests

Members and officers were reminded of the need to declare any personal or financial interest in any item to be considered during the meeting.

Andrew Baird declared that, as part of his role with the FE Commissioner's National Leaders of Governance team, he has been seconded to Brooklands College as the interim Chair. Phillip Kerle declared that he is a governor of West London College.

There were no other declarations of interest.

C.02.22 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from

Simon Potten	-	business commitments
Simon Bland	-	personal commitments
Bob Pickles	-	persona commitments
Natalie Watkins-Khan	-	personal commitments

Agreed

The Board accepts the apologies for absence.

C.03.22 Notification of Any Other Business

Members agreed that there was no other business to be considered.

C.04.22 Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Corporation Board held on 9 December 2021

The minutes of the meeting was approved and signed as a correct record, subject to minor amendment as discussed.

C.05.22 Matters arising and action points from the minutes of the meeting

Members reviewed the schedule of action points arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

It was agreed that all actions had been satisfactorily completed and that there were no other matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

Membership of the Corporation

C.06.22 Membership Report

The Director of Governance presented a report, which identified issues relating to the current membership of the Corporation Board and its Committees.

Members were advised that

- since the report had been written, Peter Papanastasiou has tendered his resignation as a governor due to health issues
- there are three reappointments due in the summer term
- although it is not proposed to appoint a Link Governor for Equality and Diversity, Andrew Baird has agreed to attend meetings of the College's Equality & Diversity group to support this area and will give feedback to the Board following meetings that he attends

Gender Balance and Diversity

Members noted the current gender balance and diversity of the Corporation Board

- 11 male; 8 female
- 4 male chairs of the Board and committees; 1 female chair of the committees

Members were saddened to receive the resignation of Peter and, in discussion, agreed that the Board's thanks should be formally recorded in the meeting minutes to acknowledge the hard work and contribution made by him to the College and the Board during his time as a governor.

Andrew Baird withdrew from the meeting and it was agreed that Colin Monk would assume the Chair

C.07.22

Succession Planning for the Board

The Director of Governance presented a report detailing proposals for succession planning for the Board over the next few years.

Members were advised that the Search and Governance Committee at the meeting held on 10 February 2022 had given consideration to the proposals and are recommending that

- the current term of office for Andrew Baird is extended by 2 years when his current term ends so that the Board may consider his reappointment as Chair of the Corporation for the same period
- provision is made for there to be a Chair Designate in place, which would facilitate a seamless 'handover' between the outgoing Chair and the new Chair

By way of background to Andrew's term of office, the Board was reminded that

- in late 2019 the Board decided to extend his term of office of the Chair, due to end in 2020, by two years to 31 August 2022
- this was agreed to maintain senior leadership stability through the first few years of merger and because of the Chair's growing national position, which gave him a wider view and greater knowledge of the sector as a whole

The Board was informed that Andrew has indicated his willingness to be considered for a further term of two years.

Members gave consideration to the proposal to extend Andrew's term and it was suggested that as he has been a Board member for a number of years with his term already extended, the Board could be perceived as not being sufficiently and regularly refreshed with skills and expertise by allowing him to continue.

The Search and Governance Committee had explored this issue in depth and it was explained that there are two overriding reasons for this additional extension, both relating to the following external factors:

- His role as one of the FE Commissioner's National Leaders of Governance has expanded to include an additional interim position as Chair of another FE college, the mentoring of several other Chairs and recent involvement in establishing national training programmes for Directors of Governance and wider governing bodies. Hence his understanding and experience within the sector has increased substantially
- The soon to be finalised Skills and Post-16 Education Bill will change the landscape of FE links with local employers and Andrew's considerable experience of the local employment environment, built over years of living within the area and participating in a wide range of local activities in addition to his role on the College board, places him in an excellent position to assist the College in growing through the changes both externally and internally that will follow enactment of the legislation

In the light of this, the Board agreed that it would be wise to allow him to continue, and thus ensure continuity of the Board, for a further term of two years when his current term ends so that the Board may formally consider his reappointment as the Chair of the Corporation for the same period at the summer term meeting.

Members were advised that the Search and Governance Committee had also considered that two years is a relatively short time and are proposing the Board takes the necessary steps now to ensure that a suitable successor is available for consideration in 2024.

Resolved

The Corporation Board endorses the recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee and approves extending Andrew Baird's current term by 2 years when his current term ends so that the Board may consider his reappointment as Chair of the Corporation for the same period at the summer term meeting

Andrew Baird re-joined the meeting and assumed the Chair

The Board considered the proposal put forward by the Search and Governance Committee that the role of a 'Chair Designate' is put in place now to support succession planning for the Board. This role would help to facilitate a 'handover period' between the outgoing Chair and the new Chair. It was noted that

- whilst two Chairs would not ordinarily hold office at the same time, there is nothing in the Instrument & Articles to prevent the Corporation electing a 'Chair Designate' some time prior to the expiry of the existing Chair's term of office
- the Chair Designate would not be a formal office and would not carry any specific authority, but would allow for a more structured handover or learning period
- the Chair Designate would be formally appointed as Chair at the last meeting before or the first meeting which follows the expiration of the outgoing Chair's term

Members discussed the proposal and agreed that putting in place a Chair Designate was very sensible and would ensure that there is a seamless 'handover' between the outgoing Chair and the new Chair. It also demonstrated an excellent way to support the Succession Planning for the Board.

Resolved

The Corporation Board endorses the recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee and approves that provision is made for there to be a Chair Designate in place and the Corporation's Standing Orders amended accordingly.

C.08.22

Learner Voice

The student members gave a verbal report on some of the student activities during the spring term 2022.

East Surrey College

Jhalak Limbachia informed the Board regarding

- ESC College Council – 4 sessions took place in February and March
 - key strengths identified
 - supportive teaching environment, practical lessons enjoyable and good facilities
 - key areas of development
 - more enrichment and staff to support enrichment, lanyards (wearing and cost of replacement) and further develop food offer in canteen
- the events held to raise money for charity – Netball tournament and Red Nose Day
- student union involvement in the ESC Open Event on 23 February

John Ruskin College

Elizabeth Konan informed the Board regarding

- JRC College Council – 1 session took place in February
 - key strengths identified
 - good quality teaching, enjoyable practical lessons, supportive teachers, reasonable deadlines and feeling safe at College
 - key areas of development
 - more trips/excursions and visits, upgrade of gym facilities and a review of timetable
- the implementation of thought-provoking tutorials across all departments
- connecting with business employees and workers in the wider community

The Board thanked the student members for their reports commenting that it was encouraging to see the number of activities involving students with positive feedback.

Agreed

The Corporation Board agreed to receive and note the reports

C.09.22

Report of the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive presented her report, drawing attention to issues not otherwise covered in the agenda, under the headings:

- The Further Education Landscape
 - Covid-19 Impact on operations
- Safeguarding and Wellbeing
- Quality of provision
 - Student Success
 - Careers guidance
- Community Engagement
 - Schools
 - Adults/upskilling/reskilling
 - Refugees, Asylum seekers
- Applications for 2022/23
 - Curriculum Planning
- Higher Education
- Apprenticeships
- Partnership working
 - College Collaboration Fund
- Financial and Estates position

Members discussed the issues raised and, in response to questions, were advised that

- the College's Safeguarding team continues to be busy with a high proportion of disclosures and support for mental health including wellbeing difficulties together with a sustained small number of high-risk cases related to abuse, including peer-on-peer sexual assault and harassment where those involved have attended OSC
- the College is working with a number of different organisations and charities to promote student wellbeing and to provide additional support and referral routes within the wider community
- Attendance from January to February half term was impacted by the Omnicron outbreak and self-isolation, with average attendance in this period only 75%. Since this period, attendance has been slowly increasing and it should be noted that there a number of students in vulnerable categories which has impacted attendance. However, despite this, attendance to examinations in the first half term was good at both sites

- Applications for 2022/23 are being closely monitored and action has already been taken where single figure applicants were noticeable on a few qualifications to give guidance on alternatives within the Group. Although competition with Reigate College is always an issue for ESC, there are numerous competitors for JRC and a history of low conversion rates compounded by Covid preventing visits in the prime summer and autumn terms. The College is working with many schools in the area to support Year 11s on their post-16 applications and a number of 'taster' days and tours are in train at both campuses
- exam grades have previously been an issue with these being awarded through assessment, this year's exams are being taken so 'grade inflation' should reduce slightly

The Board thanked the Chief Executive for a very informative report, which addresses a number of key issues in the sector.

Agreed

The Corporation Board agreed to receive and note the Report of the Chief Executive

C.10.22

Annual Schedule of Meetings of the Corporation Board and Committees: 2022/23

The Director of Governance presented, for consideration and approval, the Annual Schedule of Meetings of the Corporation Board and Committees for 2022/23.

Members were advised that the Annual Schedule of Meetings had been considered at the meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee held on 3 March 2022 and had been commended for approval by the Corporation Board.

Members were advised that the schedule

- reflected that of the current and previous years
- provides for termly 'training and development' meetings in addition to meetings of the Corporation Board and Committees

The Board reviewed the schedule of meetings and agreed this presented a clear timetable and should be accepted.

Members were advised that the Committee had also given consideration to the basis for the continuation of virtual meetings post Covid-19 restrictions. The Committee considered that virtual meetings have been successful since the start of lockdown in March 2020, not only by allowing the Board and Committees to continue their business without interruption, but had also greatly improved the attendance by members with the convenience of virtual meetings and the benefit of attendance of college events online and recommended they continue post Covid restrictions.

In discussion, it was agreed that as the current arrangements of virtual meetings for committees and in College for the full Board had been successful, they should continue for 2022/23.

Resolved

The Corporation Board endorses the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee and approves

- the Annual Schedule of Meetings of the Corporation Board and Committees: 2022/23
- the continuation of virtual meetings for committees and in College when the full Board meets

C.11.22 Search and Governance Committee

Meeting of the Search and Governance Committee held on 10 February 2022

Members received the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting.

C.12.22 Report of the Chair of the Search and Governance Committee and issues for consideration and approval

The Chair of the Search and Governance Committee reported on the key issues considered at the meeting, not otherwise considered at this meeting of the Corporation Board, for formal consideration and approval:

- Risk Management: Spring Term 2022
- Governors' Development and Training Programme 2021/22
- Governors' Quality Improvement Plan 2021/22 Spring Term 2022
- Review of College Governance with Members of the Corporation in 2021/22

C.13.22 Learning and Quality Committee

Meeting of the Learning and Quality Committee held on 24 February 2022

Members received the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting.

C.14.22 Report of the Chair of the Learning and Quality Committee and issues for consideration and approval

On behalf of the Chair of the Learning and Quality Committee, Grace Marriott reported on the key issues considered at the meeting, not otherwise considered at this meeting of the Corporation Board, for formal consideration and approval:

- Risk Management: Spring Term 2022
- College Policies
 - ESC04 HE Assessment & Appeals Policy
 - OSC49 Personal Care Policy
 - OSC09 Fitness to Study Policy
- College Quality Improvement Plan for 2021/22
- Teaching, Learning & Assessment Framework
- Termly Safeguarding report for ESC and JRC
- Termly Quality & Standards Report: Spring Term 2022, including Subcontracting update, Curriculum Planning and T Levels

C.15.22 Finance and Resources Committee

Meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee held on 3 March 2022

Members received the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting.

C.16.22 Report of the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee and issues for consideration and approval

The Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee reported on the key issues considered at the meeting, not otherwise considered at this meeting of the Corporation Board, for formal consideration and approval:

- Risk Management: Spring Term 2022
- College Policies
 - OSC14 Local Recognition & Procedural Agreement Policy
- Property Strategy
- Capital Bids
- Termly HR report for Spring Term 2022

The Chair of the Committee advised that the management accounts to 31 January 2022, which had been circulated to the Board following the meeting, had also been reviewed at the meeting. The Committee had agreed that JRC remains a concern with lower than budgeted 16-18 recruitment, but considered that appropriate actions were being taken and it was anticipated that improvements would be realised over the next two years.

C.17.22 Audit Committee

Meeting of the Audit Committee held on 17 March 2022

Members received the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting.

C.18.22 Report of the Chair of the Audit Committee and issues for consideration and approval

The Chair of the Audit Committee reported on the key issues considered at the meeting, not otherwise considered at this meeting of the Corporation Board, for formal consideration and approval:

- Risk Management: Spring Term 2022
- Audit Tracker
- Reappointment of Buzzacott as the College's external auditors for a further 2 year term

Resolved

The Corporation Board

- notes the reports of the Chair of each of the committees of the Board
- endorses the approval by each committee of the key issues considered and approved at the meetings
- endorses and approves the reports submitted by each committee for consideration and approval

C.19.22 Link Governors

Each Link Governor was invited to report on the activities undertaken during the term in their capacity as a Link Governor.

Link Governor for Safeguarding including Prevent – Liz Rushton

In the absence of the Link Governor for Safeguarding attending the meeting in person, the Director of Governance reported on her behalf that

- she has participated in the College's termly Safeguarding Strategy Group meeting
- there has been a further electronic single central record (SCR) review undertaken by the Executive Director of HR in January and the outcome shared with the Link Governor. The audit revealed one outstanding matter which was followed up immediately
- she visited the College in February for an update on HR safeguarding matters in general and a detailed inspection of the SCR and was advised of the rolling programme to ensure all staff renew their DBS status every 3 years, which has included all governors
- one safeguarding incident reported to the Chair/Vice Chair on 1 February, which was managed promptly and effectively by the Executive Team
- she has undertaken standard refresher e-courses this term

Link Governor for Higher Education – Colin Monk

The Link Governor reported that

- a number of consultations have been introduced over the past few months that will lead to change in the HE sector, including
 - new reporting requirements on continuation, completion and progression rates
 - national maximum tuition fees frozen for two more years
 - student loan repayments terms changed with a lower starting salary for repayment
 - measures to boost recruitment of Level 4 and 5 courses
 - start of consultation on Lifelong Learning Accounts, paving the way for adults to have wider access to student loans
 - possible reintroduction of student number targets on certain courses
 - introduction of minimum entry requirements to qualify for student loans
 - Office for Student access and participation plans will in future need to show ambitious targets for decreasing dropout and increasing graduate employment
 - substantial changes made to the Teaching Excellence Framework but the introduction of a new minimum level of 500 HE students means that the College will not yet be included as our current level is 362

Link Governor for Careers – Bob Pickles

In the absence of Bob Pickles, there was no update, but the Director of Governance advised that the 'Careers Education: A guide for college governors' document will be further considered at the next meeting of the Strategy Committee

Link Governor for Sustainability – Lily Franklin

The Link Governor reported that

- she attended the meeting of the College's Sustainability group in February
- a survey among students regarding climate change issues was undertaken and student membership has been encouraged to gain feedback and gauge interest
- a review of curriculum has included sustainability

Agreed

The Corporation Board thanked each of the Link Governors for their very informative and positive reports.

C.20.22

KPI Dashboard

Members received the KPI Dashboards for:

- Apprenticeships – retention and achievement rates by age and level
- Three year classroom based achievement
- Finance

Members were advised that the Learning and Quality Committee had agreed that the Principal would undertake a reassessment of the two dashboards presented to this Committee and proposals will be presented at the next meeting.

Agreed

The Board receives and notes the KPI Dashboards for Apprenticeships, three year classroom based achievement and Finance.

C.21.22 Any Other Business

There was no agreed any other business.

C.22.22 Dates of Corporation Board Meetings: 2021/22

Friday 24 June 2022 – Corporation Self-Assessment Meeting to be held at the Burford Bridge Hotel, commencing at 4pm

Thursday 7 July 2022 – main Corporation Board, commencing at 6pm

At the conclusion of the Part 1 meeting, the Corporation Board moved into a meeting restricted, in accordance with the Instrument and Articles of Government and with Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, to the independent members of the Board, the external co-opted member of the Audit Committee and to the senior post holders.

Signed as a correct record:

Date: 7 July 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Baird', written in a cursive style.