

Governing Board

Tue 04 July 2023, 16:30 - 19:30

Leigh Drama Studio, Leigh College



Attendees

Present: Ann Harrison (Chair) (Independent Governor), Kath Causey (Independent Governor), Andrea Ferguson (Independent Governor), Jenny Bullen (Independent Governor), Hayley Mercer (Independent Governor), Nazia Rehman (Independent Governor), Harinder Dhaliwal (Independent Governor), Susan Snape (Independent Governor), Susan Spibey (Independent Governor), Rebecca Turley (Staff Governor), Anna Dawe (Principal).

In attendance: Joanne Platt (Director of Governance), Louise Brown (Vice Principal, Corporate Services), Alison Rushton (Vice Principal - Employment & Skills), Steven Scott (Finance Director), Dave Harrison (Vice Principal – Data & Funding)

The Director of Governance confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

Meeting minutes

1. Board Development: Governor Code of Conduct

GB-23-07-01

Board members received a presentation on the Governor Code of Conduct as a Board Development Session, attended by Ann Harrison, Nazia Rehman, Rebecca Turley, Harinder Dhaliwal, Susan Snape, Susan Spibey and Haley Mercer. Jenny Bullen joined for the last five minutes of the session.

2. Apologies for absence

GB-23-07-02

Apologies for absence had been received from Alison McKenzie-Folan, Tom Mooney, Steven Tomlinson, Jennifer Connor and Anne-Marie Francis.

3. Declarations of Interests

GB-23-07-03

Ann Harrison, Hayley Mercer and Nazia Rehman declared an interest in Item 7.

4. Minutes of previous meetings and matters arising

GB-23-07-04

The Board reviewed the minutes of the meetings held on 21 March 2023 and 22 May 2023 and agreed that they were an accurate record of the meeting. There were no matters arising.

Resolved: The Committee approved the minutes of the meetings held on 21 March 2023 and 22 May 2023 for signature by the Chair.



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The Chair updated the Board on a number of events she had attended including the launch of the Greater Manchester Institute of Technology and the Apprenticeship Awards evening, which had also been attended by other Governors.

The Chair confirmed that all Governor annual 1-1 meetings had now taken place, which she had found enjoyable and useful, and she thanked all Governors for their contributions in those meetings. She noted that Board members have good community and business links which makes for a very strong and diverse Board. She recognised that Governors who are still working are very busy and are not always able to take on additional leadership roles and thanked all Governors for their commitment to the College. She also noted that the appointment of three new Co-Opted Governors would strengthen governance in the College.

The Board noted the update.

6. Principal's Update

The Board received a strategic update from the Principal.

In terms of national and regional updates, the College had been actively involved in the launch of the Trailblazer Devolution Deal, proposals for which are currently out for consultation. This focus on the devolution of the curriculum for post-16 education is bringing discussions on technical education to the fore to support the 64% of school leavers in the sub-region who don't do A Levels.

In terms of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) to support its delivery has now launched with access to a potential £8.2m funding across the GM College's Group collaborative partnership. The College is the lead partner and there are five sector projects under discussion. The first stage bid has been submitted and £100k has been approved to fund the development of the stage 2 bid. Funding is split evenly between capital and revenue although the Board noted the time limitations on spending of the revenue funding which may prove challenging.

The Board noted that the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan was published last week, with the aim to double medical school training places to 15,000 by 2031, with more places in areas with the greatest shortages, to increase the number of GP training places by 50% to 6,000 by 2031 and to almost double the number of adult nurse training places by 2031, with 24,000 more nurse and midwife training places a year by 2031. The College is considering its response along with its partners in the Education & Skills Partnership with the hospital Trust and Edgehill University positioned to lead discussions and the response.

In terms of the College's strategic priorities, retention at 16-18 is expected to be lower than last year and not yet back to 2018-19 levels. As such it is expected that overall achievement will reduce. Mental health and resilience arising from the pandemic has impacted on this. The College has responded to this by reshaping services in the Head of Studies Team to provide more capacity to support young people who are struggling. Conversely retention at 19+ is up from last year and it is expected that achievement rates will increase this academic year. Indications for apprenticeship completions are well above national average, albeit the national average is very low. Challenges in End Point Assessment may however see the College fall short of previous predictions.

Governors noted that the College is still awaiting the outcome of the Teaching Excellence Framework assessment for HE and that the new parental questionnaire has raised some concerns in relation to communications and progress reporting, which is being addressed. A further increase in examinations may impact on pass rates. However current predictions show potential increases in overall passes but a decline in high grades.

In terms of Place and Productivity, Greater Manchester (GM) has been confirmed as having higher productivity than London and the highest in the country over the last 3 years, although it isn't yet clear how this has affected the Borough. The College is an active stakeholder in an exercise to undertake an economic refresh and it was



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noted that the Council has commissioned a space / location review.

The Education & Skills Partnership – Care Academy (LALC) is planning an extension to the Centre of Excellence based at Wigan in the CATs building, with a focus on community and public health. The top floor of LALC is to be refurbished, and the whole building will then be occupied and fully recommissioned. It was noted that Counselling is a significant specialism with the Academy and Wigan Family Welfare are a primary partner in the development of this provision.

In response to the LSIP and local needs, the 'Power House' is under development. This is a specialist development at Pagefield with a focus on renewables / sustainability and power. College and university visits have been undertaken to scope out equipment needs and curriculum focus and the LSIF project and Institute of Technology are both linked to this project.

Governors noted that the Adult Education Budget (AEB) has been fully utilised with overspend within tolerance. A sampling programme over the summer term will see more than 3,000 Year 10 students visit the College to sample technical education. In addition, GCSE Maths and English classes are being developed and offered to home schooled children in the Borough.

In terms of Investment for the Future, there will be substantial estates and equipment investment over the summer, including DfE funded Transformation work, the LALC - Care Academy, the Power House and T Level Capital funding of c£500k to improve Animal Management facilities at Leigh College. The CAVE is now completed and it was agreed to showcase this and the new Performing Arts Centre to Governors before the October meeting of the Board.

In terms of student numbers, a revised approach to internal progression has had a positive impact and applications for 16-18 are up on the previous year. Recruitment for apprenticeships are on track to grow in 23-24 and AEB enrolment is already ahead of this time last year. The College will discuss budget allocation based on increased numbers with the GMCA in due course. Although HE applications are slightly behind last year, Degree Apprenticeship numbers are indicating growth which should offset this.

In terms of Workforce, new initiatives to enhance 'good employer' status and support staff are being developed including strategies relating to workload and work life balance. The VP Corporate Services is very active with the GM Good Employment Charter and it was noted that her award of Leader of the Year had helped to put the College (and the FE sector) on the map in relation to workforce initiatives. Governors noted the increase to the established staffing budget and that there will be no Association of Colleges pay recommendation this year.

Governors commended the Executive Team on a very successful year, noting that the Institute of Technology will be open in September 2023 and that the College will host World Skills in November 2023. They also noted some exciting developments on the horizon, particularly in relation to green energy, but Governors are concerned about the resilience of the next generation of learners coming through and the huge increase in the number of students who are home schooled with no requirement to take GCSEs.

The Board noted the update .



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Ann Harrison, Nazia Rehman and Hayley Mercer left the meeting at 5.46pm.

The Board discussed Nazia Rehman's first probationary year as a Governor, which comes to an end on 5 July 2023 and agreed that her appointment for the remainder of her four-year term of office should be confirmed.

The Board noted that a new Lead Governor role for SEND had been agreed by the Search and Governance Committee and agreed to appoint Hayley Mercer to this role.

The Board noted that the current Chair's third term of office as a Governor comes to an end in October 2023 and that both of the two Vice Chairs have stated that they are not currently in a position to stand as Chair. It was noted that the current Chair does not wish to serve a further four-year term of office, but is willing to serve for a further year pending the appointment of a new Chair and the Board agreed to appoint her as a Governor and as Chair of the Governing Board for a further year to the end of October 2024, pending the appointment of a new Chair.

Ann Harrison, Hayley Mercer and Nazia Rehman re-joined the meeting at 5.48pm.

The Board noted proposed changes to some committee memberships that had been discussed by the Search and Governance Committee and were recommended to the Governing Board for approval. The Board agreed to the proposed changes.

The Board also noted that the Search and Governance Committee had interviewed candidates for the roles of Co-Opted Governors to the Audit Committee (two) and one for the Resources Committee and have recommended the appointment of Julie Barnes as Co-Opted Governor to the Resources Committee for a term of four-years from 1 September 2023, and the appointment of Jo Toner and Sarah Smith as Co-Opted Governors to the Audit Committee for a term of four-years from 1 September 2023.

The Board was also asked to approve the two new Student Governor appointments and appointed them to the Curriculum and Student Matters Committee.

The Board agreed to increase the quorum for both the Audit Committee and the Remuneration Committee from two to three members.

Resolved: The Board confirmed the appointment of Nazia Rehman for the remainder of her four-year term of office.

Resolved: The Board appointed Hayley Mercer as Lead Governor for SEND.

Resolved: The Board appointed Ann Harrison as a Governor and Chair of the Governing Board for a further year until 31 October 2024.

Resolved: The Board confirmed committee memberships and Chairs / Vice Chairs for 2023-24.

Resolved: The Board appointed Julie Barnes as Co-Opted Governor to the Resources Committee for a term of four-years from 1 September 2023

Resolved: The Board appointed Jo Toner as Co-Opted Governor to the Audit Committee for a term of four-years from 1 September 2023.

Resolved: The Board appointed Sarah Smith as Co-Opted Governor to the Audit Committee for a term of four-years from 1 September 2023.

Resolved: The Board appointed Aston Aldred as Student Governor for a two-year term of office, commencing on 1 August 2023.

Resolved: The Board appointed Emilie Hoyland as Student Governor for a one-year term of office, commencing on 1 August 2023.

Resolved: The Board appointed Aston Aldred and Emilie Hoyland to the Curriculum and Student Matters Committee for the whole of their respective terms of office.

Resolved: The Board approved changes to the Terms of Reference for both the Audit and Remuneration Committees, to increase the quorum for both committees from two to three members.



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8. Budget and Financial Plan for 2023-24

GB-23-07-08

The Board reviewed the proposed College budget for 2023-24 and the financial plan up to 2025, which had been scrutinised by the Resources Committee at its meeting on 23 May 2023.

It was noted that the College expects to deliver an operating surplus before FRS102 adjustments of £764k in 2023-24 and an operating surplus of £555k in 2024-25. The Budget includes capital investment of £1.25m for estate improvements in 2023-24 and £1m in 2024-25.

Cash balances are forecast to remain strong with a year-end budget position of £11.1m at the end of 2023-24 and £11.371m in 2024-25. This forecast reporting surplus will ensure that the College maintains a minimum financial health grade of 'good' and will continue to operate within the terms of its bank loan covenants.

The final outturn forecast for 2022-23 and the proposed Budget will form the basis of the ESFA's three year financial plan, which has to be submitted to the ESFA by 31 July 2023.

In reviewing the budget and financial plan, it was noted that external factors still give rise to uncertainties. Inflation is a global concern and CPI has remained above the 10% mark for seven consecutive months to February 2023.

For the purposes of the plan, the College has included an increase in general curriculum budgets by 10% which has been increased further for areas with high volumes of raw materials on an individual basis.

The latest intelligence on energy costs from the College's energy brokers suggests that prices will begin to fall during 2023-25. However this is still an area of concern and the College has therefore been prudent in its forecasting.

Pay costs is also a national issue, as the Association of Colleges does not intend to make a recommendation on pay rises for 2023-24. The budget includes the remuneration strategy for the coming academic year.

The Board noted that interest rates are predicted to rise further which will impact on loan repayments but that this will be offset by increased interest income on cash balances.

Governors were pleased to see the College's balance sheet looking very strong and agreed to approve the budget and financial plan.

Resolved: The Board approved the budget and financial plan for 2023-24

9. Updates to Safeguarding Policies

GB-23-07-09

The Board reviewed proposed changes to the College's Safeguarding and Prevent Policies, noting that changes made are in line with revisions to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 effective from 1 September 2023. The revised policies also reference Wigan Children's Safeguarding Partnership model policy.

Resolved: The Board approved the Safeguarding, Child Protection and Early Help Policy for 2023-24.

Resolved: The Board approved the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy for 2023-24.

Resolved: The Board approved the Prevent Strategy for 2023-24.

10. Summer Term Updates



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10.1. Careers and Destinations

GB-23-07-10

The Lead Governor for Careers and Destinations had no update for this meeting.

10.2. Safeguarding

GB-23-07-11

The Lead Governor for Safeguarding and Prevent assured Governors that College staff had applied due diligence in updating the College's Safeguarding Policies in readiness for September. This includes updates in relation to diversity, where positive action can now be taken to address inequalities, as long as it is proportionate. Updates to the policies also form part on on-going staff training.

She also advised the Board that increased expectations in relation to monitoring use of IT systems had been addressed with the involvement of staff to ensure that systems are in place to protect students.

There is excellent mental health and cost of living support in place to help students, including practical help and signposting to other support available.

The Board noted the update.

11. Annual Stakeholder Engagement Report

GB-23-07-12

The Board reviewed the Annual Stakeholder report, noting that it has been updated to make reference to the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection and in particular the finding that the College makes a strong contribution to meeting skills needs in the area. It also includes an update on stakeholder activity including the response to the Greater Manchester Local Skills Improvement Plan, has updated stakeholder case studies and updated Impact reports.

Governors welcomed the report, which provides rich data and evidence to triangulate other information presented to Governors throughout the year. They queried where Governors featured in the report and it was agreed that Governors will be mentioned specifically, as stakeholders in future reports.

Governors noted that attending various stakeholder engagement events was useful, with many Governors speaking to staff and employers at these events, which helps to 'lift' the narrative in the report.

In response to a question from a Governor, it was confirmed that the 'red' areas in the SPOC report are being addressed by the College, with a focus on consistency in the application of standards amongst teaching staff. Reporting of apprentices' progress to employers is also an area of focus.

Governors queried the data in relation to enrichment and it was confirmed that the data for all students was aggregated in the report. In reality, enrichment for 16-18 year olds is strong, although more needs to be done in relation to enrichment activities for apprentices and adult learners. Governors were advised about future plans to provide additional capacity and facilities for physical activity in the College, in partnership with the Council and health partners and proposals for students to participate in Duke of Edinburgh awards.

The Board noted the report.

12. Audit Committee Reports



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12.1. Review performance of Internal and External Auditors and confirmation of re-appointment of External Auditors

GB-23-07-13

The Board noted that the Audit Committee had reviewed the performance of the College's Internal Auditors and External Auditors, with a view to re-affirming the appointment of the External Auditor in line with the existing contract, and had concluded that both had performed well and in accordance with agreed key performance indicators. It was noted that the Committee had recommended the re-appointment of Wylie & Bisset as the College's Financial Statements Auditors for a further year, although the Board noted that the External Audit contract is due for renewal in 2023-24 and that the Audit Committee will begin the process of re-tendering the contract at its November meeting.

Governors asked that the Financial Statements Auditors attend the December meeting of the Governing Board to present the Financial Statements Audit Report in person.

Resolved: The Board noted the report and approved the appointment of Wylie & Bisset as the College's Financial Statements Auditors for the 2022-23 accounts.

12.2. Financial Statements Audit Planning Memorandum

GB-23-07-14

The Board considered the Financial Statements Audit Planning Memorandum for the 2022-23 accounts, noting that work on site will start on 2 October and will be completed by 25 October. Wylie & Bisset will then present its report on the outcome of the Audit to the Audit Committee in November and to the Governing Board in December.

Resolved: The Board approved the Financial Statements Audit Planning Memorandum.

13. Resources Committee Reports

13.1. Sub-Contracting Strategy and Values

GB-23-07-15

The Board considered the College's proposed Sub-Contracting Strategy and Values for the forthcoming year, noting that it has strategically reduced the level of subcontracted provision year on year, to a level that will now be maintained. The College only subcontracts with two key strategic partners, and has a clear strategic rationale for subcontracting. It was noted that sub-contracting provision amounts to 2% of funded income and the quality of that provision is high.

The Board noted that the Sub-Contracting Strategy and Values had been considered by the Resources Committee at its meeting in June and was recommended to the Board for approval.

Resolved: The Board approved the Sub-Contracting Strategy and Values for 2023-24.



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The Board considered the Sub-Contracting Report and Fees and Charges Policy for 2023-24, noting that the College is continuing with its risk banding framework approach to setting fees and charges and accordingly, there are only minor presentational changes from the previous Policy.

The Board noted that the Sub-Contracting Report and Fees had been considered by the Resources Committee at its meeting in June and was recommended to the Board for approval.

Resolved: The Board approved the Sub-Contracting Report and Fees / Charging Policy for 2023-24.

14. Board and Committee Calendar and Cycles of Business for 2023-24

The Board reviewed the draft Committee and Board calendar and cycles of business for 2023-24, noting that Committee and Board meeting dates have been discussed and agreed with the relevant Chairs.

It was agreed to bring the start time for the December meeting of the Board forward by an hour and to hold the Governors' Christmas meal on the same night, starting at 6.30pm.

Resolved: Subject to the above change, the Board approved the Board and Committee Calendar and Cycles of Business for 2023-24.

15. Capital Projects Update

The Board received a presentation on capital projects taking place in the College.

In relation to the DfE funded Transformation Project, it was noted that the Pre-Construction Services Agreement between the DfE and Willmott Dixon has been signed, weekly client engagement meetings are taking place and significant progress is now being made on layout plans, with a focus on the schedule of floor areas, building adjacencies, the supporting ICT Strategy and the Fittings, Furnishing and Equipment Strategy (legacy vs new) with Willmott Dixon now commissioning intrusive surveys. The Contractors have also now started to engage with Wigan Council planners.

Governors noted that discussions are underway in relation to the entrance to the new site and traffic management and options based on similar layouts in Oldham and Liverpool were discussed. Nazia Rehman agreed to raise this with Council colleagues.

Indicative timescales indicate planning permission being sought in August with an expected decision by December 2023. Site set up / mobilisation (School for Arts demolition) is anticipated by November 2023 with demolition of the old School for the Arts expected by April 2024. The new building is expected to complete by January 2025 with a decant into the new building anticipated by February 2026. Demolition of the old building will be complete by August 2026 and all external works will be completed by December 2026.

Governors viewed layout plans for the new building and for the refurbishment of Pagefield to house a new Performing Arts Centre which will see conversion of the UCLAN Building at a projected cost of £1.776m.

In terms of the Institute of Technology (IoT), it was noted that the project is on budget and the tender report has been approved by the DfE. Works have now commenced on-site and are due for completion by the end of August. The College is procuring specialist equipment, which accounts for approximately 47% of the total project spend.

The Office for Students funded project for the refurbishment of the Learning Resource Centre has been



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procured in parallel to the IoT project and the work is on track for completion by August. The VR CAVE is now complete, with specialist equipment installed and will be operational from mid-July for staff training. It was noted that several large employers have expressed an interest in using The CAVE for staff training purposes.

The Small Capital Works Programme includes work to refurbish areas of the ground, 400 and 600 floors at Parson's Walk to create resources for Photography, Art and Ceramics to facilitate the demolition of the School for the Arts. Pagefield will see the expansion of the brick workshop into plastering, expansion of the carpentry and joinery workshop into a machine shop, the refurbishment of the engineering staffroom, refurbishment of the Maths / English classroom, the refurbishment of a room dedicated for the work with Heinz UK and the resurfacing of the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), funded by Wigan Foundation for Technical Education.

The Centre for Advanced Technical Studies will see the refurbishment of the IT room to create an E-sports teaching room and the top floor and the redundant spa area on the ground floor of the Leigh Adult Learning Centre (LALC) building will be stripped out. The College is currently formulating plans for the utilisation of these spaces.

Contracts for PV installation at Leigh College, LALC and Pagefield are being prepared and an installation timeline will shortly be agreed with the provider. In addition, there are plans for the installation of electric vehicle charging points at LALC (five in total across LALC and Pagefield). Governors also noted the success of the College's 'Green Week' held in April.

In relation to the College's Estates' Strategy, it was noted that many of its objectives have now been realised, including the repurposing of the the Image Centre at LALC, the ongoing investment at the Pagefield Centre, the Digital Academy / relocation of hair and beauty at Leigh College and the creation of the Centre for Advanced Technical Studies.

The Strategy is due for refresh in the next academic year and will be updated to reflect changes made and the ongoing transformation project and current business objectives and curriculum needs. An updated strategy will be needed to support future capital funding bids.

In terms of next steps, implementation of the Wave 5 T-Level capital funding for animal management at Leigh campus will start in the summer with completion anticipated by September 2024. The College will continue to work with the DfE and partners on the transformation project, whilst continuing to deliver various capital projects including early planning and concept design for the 'Power House'. Work will also start to update the College's Estates Strategy.

Governors thanked the VP Corporate Services for her work in relation to the Capital Projects, noting that it was an exciting and busy time for the College, with a significant amount of the work being funded from capital grants. They noted that she was supported by colleagues in the Executive Team and that the estates consultants are also very committed and supported her in her work.

The Board noted the update.

16. KPI Dashboards

16.1. Finance KPI Dashboard

GB-23-07-19

The Board noted that the dashboard had been subject to detailed scrutiny by the Resources Committee at its meeting on 23 May. No further questions were forthcoming.

The Board noted the update.



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16.2. HR KPI Dashboard

GB-23-07-20

The Board noted that the dashboard had been subject to detailed scrutiny by the Resources Committee at its meeting on 23 May. No further questions were forthcoming.

The Board noted the update.

16.3. Estates and Sustainability KPI Dashboard

GB-23-07-21

The Board noted that the dashboard had been subject to detailed scrutiny by the Resources Committee at its meeting on 23 May. No further questions were forthcoming.

The Board noted the update.

16.4. Curriculum KPI Dashboards

16.4.1. Study Programmes Dashboard

GB-23-07-22

The Board noted that the dashboard had been subject to detailed scrutiny by the Curriculum and Student Matters Committee at its meeting on 6 June. No further questions were forthcoming although Governors discussed the impact of the delay in national destinations data and the need for the College to use its own internal data to measure this.

The Board noted the update.

16.4.2. Adult Dashboard

GB-23-07-23

The Board noted that the dashboard had been subject to detailed scrutiny by the Curriculum and Student Matters Committee at its meeting on 6 June.

The Board noted the update.

16.4.3. Apprenticeship Dashboard

GB-23-07-24

The Board noted that the dashboard had been subject to detailed scrutiny by the Curriculum and Student Matters Committee at its meeting on 6 June.

The Board noted the update.



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The Board noted that the dashboard had been subject to detailed scrutiny by the Curriculum and Student Matters Committee at its meeting on 6 June.

The Board noted an increase in progression into HE.

The Board noted the update.

17. Part B: The following items had been the subject of discussion or approval by Committees or were attached for the Board's information only.**17.1. Link Visits Reports****GB-23-07-26**

The report was noted.

17.2. Committee Chairs' Reports**17.2.1. Audit Committee Chair's Report****GB-23-07-27**

The report was noted.

17.2.2. Curriculum and Student Matters Committee Chair's Report**GB-23-07-28**

The report was noted.

17.2.3. Resources Committee Chair's Report**GB-23-07-29**

The report was noted.

17.2.4. Search and Governance Committee Chair's Report**GB-23-07-30**

The report was noted.

18. Chair's Actions**GB-23-07-31**

The report was noted.

It was noted that the final Accountability Statement Action Plan approved by Chairs Action was appended to the report for Governors' information.

19. Any other business**GB-23-07-32**

There were no items of other business.



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The next meeting of the Board is on 10 October 2023.

The meeting ended at 7.02pm.

21. Actions

GB-23-07-06:

Action: Showcase the CAVE and new Performing Arts Centre accommodation to Governors before the October meeting of the Board.

Action by: Director of Governance to arrange.

GB-23-07-12:

Action: Include Governors as stakeholders in future Annual Stakeholder Reports

Action by: VP Employment and Skills

GB-23-07-13:

Action: The Financial Statements Auditors be asked to attend the December meeting of the Governing Board to present the Financial Statements Audit Report in person.

Action by: Finance Director to arrange.

GB-23-07-18

Action: VP Corporate Services to provide information to Nazia Rehman on plans for the new site and traffic management who will raise this with Council colleagues.

Action By: VP Corporate Services / Nazia Rehman



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