

1651 PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1651.1 Attendance, Apologies, Welcome & Introductions

Present: Nick Buckland (Chair)
Paula Davis
Jo Dyne
Patience Egbo (*By Teams*) (*From Item 1652.1*)
Kathryn Hardwidge
Tony Medhurst
Cecilia Mutuma (*By Teams*)
Mary Pooley (*By Teams*)
John Sills
Charlotte Simmonds (*From Item 1652.1*)
Anatoliy Strembitsky

In Attendance: Emily Attridge (Student Observer)
Jayne Chaplin (Clerk to the Corporation)
Andrew Clare
Phil Line (*Item 1651.3 only*)
Leah Markee (Student Observer)
Angela McLean
Mia Young (Student Observer)

Apologies: Gareth Dace, Hannah Nicholls, Sophia Howells

All were welcomed to the meeting.

1651.2 Declaration of Interests & Confidential Items

A Declaration of Interest was received from Tony Medhurst in his capacity as a Director of CK Assessment & Training Ltd (Part 2 Agenda)

Based on the commercially sensitive nature of the matters for discussion, it then was **RESOLVED** for those Items forming Part 2 of the Agenda to be taken as confidential Items of business.

1651.3 Board Development Session – Matrix Re-accreditation

A presentation was received on the College's recent Matrix re-accreditation.

After explaining the purpose and benefits of the Matrix standard and the reaccreditation process, an overview was provided of the assessor's feedback, the report observations and those areas on which to focus on going forward, noted to include the further linking of activities to Skills Builder and enrichment activities.

The presentation was noted, recognising the reaccreditation and feedback highlighted to be a reflection of the hard work of staff commending all for the time invested in securing such a positive outcome.

Phil Line left the meeting at this point

1651.4 Minutes of the Last Meeting & Matters Arising

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 March 2025 were approved as a correct record and the application of the Chair signature was authorised. Observing topics to be covered on the agenda or the subject of ongoing action, it was confirmed that there were no Matters Arising on which to report.

1651.5 Chair's Update

Observing those matters covered on the agenda, the Chair confirmed that there was nothing further he wished to add.

1652 STRATEGY & POLICY

Patience Egbo and Charlotte Simmonds Joined the meeting

1652.1 Principal's Report & College Accountability Statement

After observing those matters considered elsewhere on the Agenda, the Report and updated College Accountability Agreement Statement were considered:

- a. Discussing the feedback following the Annual Strategic Conversation meeting with the Department for Education and the assessment of College performance against its new Provider Dashboard. Then reviewing the changes to the College Accountability Agreement Statement and after acknowledging the overall format remained unchanged, members reflected on the key changes and the approach to and balance between responding to local and national priorities. Questioning whether the Agreement would remain in place for the year, members were advised that there was nothing to suggest any changes were likely but that the potential existed for amendments in the event of in-year changes to funding priorities
- b. Noting the College activities, particularly:
 - i. The data for the latest Open Evenings, recognising how overall visitor volumes across the year were reflected in an increased volume of applications and the number Year of 10 young people planning in a timely manner for Sept 26 entry to the College
 - ii. Discussing the Principal's focus groups looking at progression, observing the positive feedback on support received leading to good decision making, and discussions of part time work, volunteering and the concept of personal branding. The comments of the student observers then were noted, concurring with the feedback from the Matrix Reaccreditation Report (Minute 1651.3 refers) sharing their experience of the consistency of the use of Skills Builder
- c. Reflecting on national policy and local activities and updates, acknowledging the most recent developments but recognising the ongoing and changing nature of the current environment

The Report was noted and after consideration of the updated College Accountability Agreement Statement, it was **RESOLVED** to:

- d. **APPROVE** the full document and to instruct the Chief Accounting Officer to submit the final Accountability Agreement on a date no later than Friday 4 July 2025 in line with the extension previously agreed with the DfE, as reported to and noted by the Board at its meeting on Wednesday 26th March 2025.

1653 PERFORMANCE, PLANNING & COMPLIANCE

1653.1 From Committees

Following review by the respective committees, reports and recommendations were presented from:

1653.1.1 Search & Governance Committee, 03/07/24

The Committee Chair provided an overview of the business considered and the Committee's recommendations:

- a. Summarising its discussions of membership changes in the context of the Board's overall composition and the impact of and succession planning for forthcoming departures, presenting recommendations for membership appointments
- b. In respect of current year performance:
 - Confirming implementation of governance improvement objectives except in the further development of relationships and engagement with the student voice and external stakeholders, where progress was more limited. Highlighting the ambitious nature of the objectives with a longer-term approach and more realistic timescales were required, proposals were outlined for these to be carried into 2025/26 to allow the time required to realise the intended objectives
 - Highlighting following completion of an External Governance Performance Review in 2023/24, an internal review was required for 2024/25 proposing for this to take place at the October 25 Board meeting
- c. Summarising arrangements proposed for 2025/26, presenting recommendations regarding the key governance leadership positions.

After review and on the recommendation of the Search & Governance Committee, it was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the:

- a. **APPOINTMENT** of:
 - Nicholas Day as Business Member for a term of office of four years and a member of the Resources Committee
 - Elena Adigamova as Co-opted Member of the Resources Committee for a term of office of four years
 - Leah Markee and Mia Young as Student Members for a term of office of one year and members of the Quality, Standards & Business Planning Committee
- b. Arrangements for the 2024/25 performance review and for 2025/26, including:
 - The **RE-APPOINTMENT** of Nick Buckland as Chair of the Corporation
 - The **APPOINTMENT** of Cecilia Mutuma as Vice Chair of the Corporation from 1 December 2025 and Mary Pooley as Vice Chair in the intervening period, until 30 November 2025
 - Updated governance framework documents the Calendar of meetings, Committee memberships and the holders of other specific governance roles

1653.1.2 Resources Committee, 24/06/25

After observing those items appearing on the Agenda, the Committee Chair provided an overview of the business considered

Particularly reflecting on the annual Gender Pay Gap Update, there was questioning of any particular emerging trends/issues noting the impact on the data of the proportion of part-time and female employees and sharing experience of practice elsewhere of the tracking of mean and median data, it was recognised to be something that could be considered by the Committee in future.

Reports and the Committee's recommendations then were presented, comprising:

(a) 2024/25 Year to Date: Financial Report (May 2025)

In the context of the Group Budget approved in July 2024, setting a target operating surplus for the College of £393k, the position to the end of May 2025 was reported to be a £1,122k surplus against a £526K budgeted surplus, £596k ahead of budgeted expectation.

Reflecting further on the Quarter 4 Forecast, the key changes were summarised, highlighting:

- i. The Committee's more detailed discussions of the changes in income and expenditure, particularly the inclusion of the now confirmed funding of 16-18 in-year growth and additional AEB funding and following clarification of the approach to the rate per learner, release of monies held back due to the uncertainty around T Level recruitment and potential clawback
- ii. The programme of capital projects underway confirmed to be concluding ahead of the start of the new academic year

After responding to further points of clarification, the update was noted.

(b) 2024/25 Year to Date: Sub-Contracting Update

After summarising progress with the current year College Apprenticeship, AEB, Programmes of Study and sub-contracting activity, proposals were presented following review by the Resources Committee:

- i. Noting in respect of 2024/25, the contract variation proposed and that the partnership with Cidori continued but after identifying some challenges with low retention and pass rates on courses, the outcomes for the remaining courses would be considered before any decisions regarding contracts for 2025/26
- ii. Discussing the contract awards proposed for the 2025/26 Academic Year presented following the completion of due diligence.

After consideration and on the recommendation of the Resources Committee, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE:**

- i. In respect of 2024/25, the increase in contract value of £59,033 for CK Assessment & Training for Programmes of Study
- ii. Proposals for 2025/26, for contracts with:
 - The BetterWeld Group for Apprenticeship delivery at a value of £450,000

- CK Assessment & Training for the delivery of Apprenticeship at a value of £128,000, Programmes of Study at a value of £584,688 and GLA ASF delivery at a value of £15,000
- Tottenham Hotspur Football & Athletic Co. for delivery of Programme of Study at a value of £164,000
- Aspire Sporting Academy for GLA ASF delivery at a value of £100,000
- Learning & Skills Solutions for GLA ASF delivery at a value of £100,000 and for GLA ASF (FCFJ) delivery at a value of £40,000
- New Generation Training & Consultancy for GLA ASF delivery at a value of £144,000
- SPS Training Solutions for GLA ASF delivery with a value of £100,000

(c) 2025/26 Arrangements – Fees Policy, Budget & Financial Plan

Presented in the context of:

- i Funding body recommendations, the updated College Fees Policy was received outlining the approach to the setting and operation of fees associated with academic provision for the period 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026
- ii The approach to the College Group and updated Assumptions and curriculum plan, the Budget and Financial Plan were received. After recognising where some information was to be updated but the overall position presented was unchanged, members noted:
 - The proposal for 2025/26, for a College operating surplus of £431k and a Group Budget operating surplus of £581k
 - Over the life of the Plan, the expectation of achievement of financial objectives, the maintaining of a Financial Health assessment of “Outstanding” and compliance with Bank Covenants

The Plan was summarised and considered. Members then:

- iii Then recognised the continuing challenges and uncertainties of the current operating environment, noting the potential was noted for the Assumptions and plans to be revisited and reported on as further information became available
- iv Discussed the likelihood of in-year growth during 2025/26, noting demographic growth was anticipated, but the impact on Government planning was highlighted as numbers were exceeding expectations. It was observed however that the College was in a favourable position, particularly in the context of experience elsewhere

After consideration and on the recommendation of the Resources Committee, it was **RESOLVED** to:

- v **APPROVE** the Fees Policy and Budget for 2025/26 and the Financial Plan 2025/26 – 2027/28

1653.1.3 Audit Committee, 18/03/25

The Committee Chair extended thanks to the former Chair for his support and invaluable contribution to the work of the Committee.

Then summarising the business considered members were advised of the reviews planned or underway to conclude the 2024/25 Audit Plan reporting that an additional meeting was scheduled for September 2025 to review those reports ahead of the meeting later in the autumn term.

Reports then were presented comprising:

(a) 2024/25: Financial Statements Year-end 31/07/25 Audit Plan

Outlining the plan for the audit of the College Financial Statements for the year-end 31/07/25, there was note of:

- i The overall scope of the audit, noted to remain unchanged
- ii The Materiality thresholds, risks considered of most importance in the context of continued sector pressures and the issues of audit significance
- iii The fees proposed for the College Group and in respect of the Teachers' Pensions End of Year Certificate, increased in-line with CPI

Following review and on the recommendation of the Audit Committee, it was **RESOLVED** to:

- **APPROVE** the Audit Planning Memorandum for the audit of the College Financial Statements for the year-end 31/07/25.

(ii) 2025/26: Internal Audit Strategy & Plan

Presenting the Internal Audit Strategy and Audit Plan for 2024/25, a summary was provided of the coverage proposed within the Plan for the year.

Considering it to be an appropriate balance of financial and non-financial reviews, members were advised that the Plan remained flexible to allow adjustments in-year, then highlighting in the context of discussions elsewhere on the Agenda (Minute 1654.2.1a refers) that review of exams now was proposed with confirmation to be provided whether this would replace or be in addition to the Plan presented.

After discussion, and on the recommendation of the Audit Committee, it was **RESOLVED** to:

- **APPROVE** the Internal Audit Strategy and Plan for 2025/26.

1654.1.4 Quality Standards & Business Planning (QSBP) Committee, 11/06/25

After providing an overview was provided of the business considered, a report was presented on 24/25 predicted outcomes:

(a) 2023/24 Predictions: Learner Outcomes

Current expectations regarding learner outcomes for the year were summarised, reporting whilst slightly down on 2023/24, it was hoped for the position to improve once all results were known. After noting the position to date, College performance nationally was observed to be positive, recognising whilst outcomes for English were comparable with the national average, outcomes for maths were in the top 20 in the country.

The update was noted.

1654.2 Statutory & Compliance

1654.2.1 Summer Term Updates

(a) Risk Management

The updated Risk Register was presented, particularly noting one further new risk added regarding exam protocols advising members of the proposal for its inclusion in the Audit Plan for the forthcoming year as prudent measure to ensure independent reassurance.

The update was noted.

(b) Health, Safety & Welfare (Safeguarding & Prevent)

In the context of the Corporation's overall responsibility for ensuring the sufficiency of the measures in place for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, the Annual Report and updated Safeguarding Policy were presented

After expressing confidence in and providing assurance about the arrangements and the monitoring of activity, an overview of developments was provided, particularly highlighting:

- The key changes in the updated Policy but the potential was acknowledged for further changes once the Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance was published in the autumn term.
- Of the key developments in year, the attendance of the estates team at briefings on the implementation of Martyn's law and manager training on critical incidents and disaster management
- A ten percent increase in safeguarding referrals with 40% of all referrals mental health related, noted to be a reflection of society with increasing concerns around the population in general and young people in particular, reporting on the investment in staff training and the introduction of a new framework to provide guidance and support to learners

Questioning and discussion included:

- Case management and the College response rate compared with the Sector noting an absence of such data to be reflective of differing approaches to the recording of such information
- The more detailed analysis of the referral and welfare data, reflecting on the extent of any relationships developed with more sector specific mental health charities, recognising the benefits of such support and agreeing that it was area for further development

Following consideration, the report was noted and it was **RESOLVED:**

- To **APPROVE** the updated Safeguarding Policy

(c) Health & Safety

Presented for information purposes only, the minutes from and the business considered at the last meeting of the Health & Safety Committee were reviewed and noted.

(d) Policies

Outlining the College approach to and its arrangements for compliance with the respective statutory or regulatory requirements, policies were presented following review by the relevant committees, confirming where updated in line with latest changes or newly introduced in line with new regulatory requirements.

Following review and on the recommendation of the Quality, Standards & Business Planning and Resources Committees, it was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE**:

- Updated policies for Admissions, Anti-Bribery, IT Acceptable Use *and* Environmental & Sustainability and Reserves

1655 OTHER BUSINESS & DATE OF NEXT MEETING

1655.1 Any Other Business: Member Departures

As the final meeting for Business member Jo Dyne, on behalf of the Corporation, the Chair offered the Board's thanks for her professional insight and invaluable contribution at meetings, paying particular tribute to her for the support as Vice Chair of the Corporation, Chair of the Resources and Remuneration Committees and during Ofsted Inspections. Members then extended their best wishes in her future endeavours.

1655.2 Dates of Next Meetings

Wednesday 22 October 2025

Wednesday 17 December 2025 (*inc. Christmas Celebration*)

Friday 23 January 2026 (*Annual Conference – at Ware*)

Wednesday 25 March 2026

Wednesday 3 July 2026

With the business forming Part 1 concluded, the meeting moved to the Part 2 confidential agenda at this point.

Signed:



Dated: 22 October 2025

Nick Buckland OBE, Chair of the Corporation