

## Minutes of the Corporation Meeting Held at 3.35pm on 07 October 2025

Present: Huw Chapman, Robbie Coates (student governor), Mark Cooper, Ashley Cullen (Teams), Alex Dartmouth (Teams), Tim Jackson, Anne Murphy, Shirley Nellthorpe, Rob Nitsch (Chair), Katy Quinn (Principal & CEO) & Pauline Tiller.

Apologies: Shahalam Ali, Prue Amner, Lyndsey Mason (staff governor), Aston Muff & Debora Welsh (staff governor).

In Attendance: Matt Phelps                      Deputy CEO & Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality  
Paola Schweitzer Director of Governance  
Maria Vetrone                      COO

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### Minutes

#### 376 Attendance and Participation

Governors welcomed Robbie Coates (student governor) to the meeting. Shahalam Ali, Prue Amner, Lyndsey Mason, Aston Muff & Debora Welsh sent their apologies.

#### 377 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 378 Matters for Decision

The 22 July 2025 minutes and confidential minutes were **Agreed** as correct records.

#### 379 Matters Arising

**Minute 371:** Katy confirmed that the decision to award a 2.5% pay increase from September 2025 was planned for implementation in November 2025 pay and there had been no variations to this since Corporation in July 2025. However, the College's pay policy meant some staff would receive other increments such as pay point increments and national living wage (NLW) increases resulting in an increase of more than 2.5%. Governors could not agree further pay recommendations at this stage but agreed to review the matter in December. In common with other colleges and universities, the UCU was in formal dispute with the College and formal negotiations would start shortly.

**Minute 325:** The digital spotlight session would be deferred to the spring term.

**Minute 366:** Katy confirmed she was in regular dialogue with Amanda Martin MP. Amanda had come into College for A level results day and more recently for a meeting with Katy where she had confirmed her support for COPC in the HSDC SPA process.

#### 380 Results Analysis 2024/25 (paper 862/25/C)

Matt presented an overview of headline 2024/25 results, noting that detailed information would be considered by L&Q Committee on 26 November 2025. Year on year improvement at the College demonstrated rapid and sustainable quality improvement at the same time as growth in 16-19 student numbers. The national average achievement rate gap for 16-19 outcomes was closing with benchmarking showing that

the College was outperforming its nearest competitors. Apprenticeship achievement had improved and the College's PIMS target were on track to be achieved.

Governors discussed the report, welcoming its granularity at such an early point in the year. They welcomed the improving apprenticeships' trajectory and noted that the decline in maths and English would be discussed at L&Q. Katy stated that as an inclusive College, it was important to demonstrate a strong value-added score as opposed to focusing just on high grades, as this was a more impactful outcome for an inclusive college and provided clear messaging for stakeholders. Governors congratulated Matt and his teams on the pleasing results and asked that their thanks be communicated to staff. Initiatives to celebrate success, some of which might involve governors, would be brought to governors in due course. Governors **Noted** the 2024/25 results analysis.

### **381 Enrolment Update 2025/26 (paper 863/25/C)**

Matt presented an overview of headline 2025/26 16-19 and apprenticeship enrolment numbers (it was too early to provide a meaningful update on adult learning). There had been strong 16-19 enrolment with the forecast 42 day position representing growth of 139 students. This was slightly under the ambitious target of 166 but represented a 5% increase in student numbers, larger than the % growth in school leavers and potentially indicated a continued increase in market share. This would lead to the opportunity to submit an in-year growth request. The apprenticeship enrolment position had also improved. In response to a question about the high number of additional high needs learners, Matt reported that funding negotiations with Portsmouth City Council were improved from previous years, and the learner experience was being carefully managed. Governors **Noted** the 2025/26 enrolment update, congratulating staff on the remarkable increase in number of starts.

Governors discussed the impact of the flooding in the Ayrton Tower at the Highbury Campus. 421 students had been displaced, some to other campuses, with targeted interventions in place to minimise the impact on retention. Curriculum risks, particularly linked to Health & Social Care T Level assessment, were being managed. The flood had devastated the 3<sup>rd</sup> and lower floors and would require redoing £500k of refurbishment work. This was in addition to the £1m infrastructure work scheduled and meant the building would not reopen until 06 January 2026. One governor asked about the affordability of future insurance premiums and Maria stated that the cause of the flood, costs and insurance matters would be reported to F&R Committee. Another governor noted that with so many students being accommodated elsewhere, it might be possible to identify additional capacity within the College. Governors recorded their thanks to staff, saying it was testament to the College that teaching was still being delivered.

### **382 Management Accounts July 2025 (paper 864/25/C)**

The management accounts included full year (FY) actuals as at 31 July 2025, which indicated an operating surplus of £953k. This was favourable to FY budget by £1.14m due mainly to additional grant funding, staffing vacancies, and some unspent non pay expenditure budgets. The forecast final outturn indicated an operating surplus of £613k, which was favourable to FY budget by £882k. This set of management accounts would form the basis of the College's 2024/25 financial statements.

Maria drew governors' attention to the variances showing how the forecast final outturn surplus had been achieved as well as the KPIs which although green, lagged the sector in some areas. Maria concluded that the College had performed well in 2024/25 but there was no room for complacency. There was a brief discussion about mean versus median. Having scrutinised the College's financial position particularly the KPIs,

adverse variances and operating deficits, forecasts to year end, emerging financial risks and mitigating actions, governors **Noted** the management accounts (July 2025).

### 383 Corporate Dashboard 2024/25, with 2025/26 KPIs (paper 865/25/C)

The corporate dashboard set out the outturn position to date on the 2024/25 KPIs compared to the 2024/25 targets and 2023/24 outturn position and represented the completion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the College's strategic plan. There were many areas of strength and excellent progress had been made in 2024/25 with another year of financial improvement, student growth, staff stabilisation as well as achieving Ofsted *Good*. Over 50% of the KPIs had been achieved with the number classified as red (target not met and a decline in 2024/25 against 2023/24) falling from 12% in 2023/24 to 10.8%.

Governors welcomed the positive report, noting that they found the strengths and areas of focus particularly helpful. In response to a question, Katy responded that the higher staff sickness figure was a result of improved processes and it was anticipated the figure would decrease by the end of 2025/26. There was a discussion about Higher Technical Qualifications and HE programmes. Katy stated that colleges were finding the market more difficult as the changing HE landscape was impacting on students who would traditionally undertake HE study at an FE college. This were particularly pronounced at COPC as HE provision was quite infant. Anne confirmed challenges in the sector were likely to remain. Katy believed, and Anne and Mark agreed, that there were opportunities to develop a powerful proposition between COPC and the University of Portsmouth and that this would be developed in the new strategic plan. Having reviewed and discussed the outturn position for 2024/25, governors **Agreed** the proposed KPIs and the main areas of strategic focus for 2025/26.

Minute 384 was confidential.

### 385 Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire (paper 868/25/C)

The College was required to appoint a reporting accountant to provide an assurance report on regularity as part of the annual financial statements regularity audit. The report was based on the statement of regularity, propriety and compliance and regularity self-assessment questionnaire (RSAQ). The College reported compliance in all areas of the RSAQ for 2024/25. On 29 September 2025 Audit Committee had made some amendments to the RSAQ and agreed to recommend it to Corporation. Maria confirmed she was still talking to the DfE and auditors about the Ayrton Tower flooding. Governors noted the high levels of compliance and **Agreed** the 2024/25 RSAQ.

### 386 Search & Governance Committee, 22 September 2025 (paper 866/25/C)

Mark gave an overview of the discussions at the S&G Committee meeting on 22 September 2025 including the 2024/25 review of governance and revisiting the external board review and external stakeholder mapping. There was a brief discussion about training and development with one governor asking to be signed up to AoC events. Governors **Agreed** the 2025/26 board training & development plan which would be recirculated. Governors also **Agreed** that:

- Mike Stoneman rejoin Corporation for a 2nd term of office as governor and that he join L&Q Committee
- Pauline Tiller serve a 2nd term of office as governor and that she remain Audit Committee chair until 31 Dec 2026
- Mark Cooper step down from S&G and join L&Q
- Rob Nitsch chair S&G Committee.
- Anne Murphy chair F&R and Remuneration Committees

- Shirley Nellthorpe chair L&Q Committee
- Katy Quinn join L&Q and F&R Committees
- Debora Welsh (staff governor) join F&R Committee

Governors **Noted** the 2024/25 review of governance & S&G annual report and S&G Committee's 22 September 2025 minutes.

**Minutes 387 – 389 were restricted confidential.**

The meeting ended at 6.30pm.