Bradford College

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION MEETING
HELD: on Thursday 20 March 2025 at 16:00 hours in
4F07 DHB Boardroom

Present:	In Attendance:
John Williams (Chair)	Sarah Cooper (Director of People Services)
Paul Birtles (Vice Chair)	Alina Khan (Vice Principal Equality, Diversity & Inclusion)
Billy Khokhar	Chris Malish (Vice Principal Finance & Corporate Services)
Chris Webb (CEO)	Jess Leech (Designated Safeguarding Lead)
Lendy Ho	Sarah Applewhite (Vice Principal Quality, Teaching & Learning)
Umar Rafique	Sarah Towan (Vice Principal Reputation & Communications)
Fiona Thompson	Liz Leek (Senior Executive Advisor) (via MS Teams)
Sharon West	Allison Booth (Governance Director)
Barbara Mangan	Rachel Henry (Deputy Governance Director)
Adam Faisal (via MS Teams)	Annabel Jelley (Skills Consultant) (via MS Teams)
Richard Woods	
David Merrett	
Tony Bullock	
Maqadas Bashir (via MS Teams)	
Kimberley Rape	
Apologies	
Lynette Leith	
Bulbul Barrett	
Gavin Hamilton	
Shahnaz Anwar-Bleem	
David Fearnley	

The quorum was 8 governors

L/J   *Denotes the time a Governor left/joined the meeting*

Item		Action
Strategic Conversation		
1.	**Being an effective Skills lead**	
1.1	Annabel Jelley (Skills Consultant) delivered a presentation on the Skills Agenda and Accountability Statements which covered the following areas: • Skills Landscape –Bradford, West Yorkshire and National • DFE Accountability Statements and Local Needs Duty • Best practice for Ofsted – contribution to skills judgement • Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)	

Destinations and Progression

Members discussed the College's current destination figures and the various factors that had led to them. The VPQT&L advised that the issues in progression in the PLW and Construction cohorts were predominantly related to the movement from Level 1 to Level 2; this was currently a key focus for the Q&S Committee. It was likely that the Business Admin figures were driven by the progression from Level 3 to work, rather than internal progression between Level 2 and 3.

Members considered how further assurance could be gained on student destinations and progression. It was noted that further exploration was required into how the Corporation should challenge, monitor and scrutinise skills provision, to ensure that the area was suitably monitored. Recognised sources of assurance included questioning in Committees, the data dashboard, development of a Skills Link Governor role, reports to Committees and the Corporation. The question of how information was shared across Committees would be a focus within the upcoming Corporation Training and Development session and was recognised as an important area of consideration moving forward.

Members asked Annabel for suggestions on which employers could be invited to participate in the conversation around the progression of the PLW cohort and were advised:

- It was important that the College demonstrated what it was doing in terms of providing careers advice.
- Evidencing students' progression, even if it was going to take them time to reach a productive destination, was vital, especially in terms of careers.
- To glean and share examples of where employers had taken learners from this cohort.
- To consider introducing an employer advisory group for this area.
- There was currently a lot of work taking place amongst employers becoming more receptive to people who have barriers.
- The College should collaborate with employers when they seek to make workplace adjustments, to facilitate further diversity and inclusion.

Members questioned whether the College was in anyway disadvantaged by Bradford having only 80 large employers and 90% of its businesses being small or micro. They were advised that:

- The 90% level was similar throughout the country.
- It was difficult for very small businesses to take learners on, in addition to the regular challenges faced in the current climate.

	• Strategically building relationships with local businesses was important and for this to be a mutually supportive relationship rather than a one-way arrangement. The Chair thanked Annabel for her presentation and members agreed it had been very helpful. The Chair requested that any members who were interested in becoming the Skills Lead Governor send any expressions of interest to the Governance Director.	
Housekeeping		
2.	**Chair's Welcome and Introductions**	
2.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
3.	**Apologies for Absence, Disclosures of Interest and Written Resolution(s), Chairs action and use of the seal**	
3.1	Apologies for absence were noted for David Fearnley, Lynette Leith, Bulbul Barrett, Shahnaz Anwar-Bleem and Gavin Hamilton.	
3.2	The Chair and Fiona Thompson disclosed an interest on agenda item 9. The Chair advised that the Vice Chair would lead on this section.	
4.	**Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2024.**	
4.1	The minutes of 12 December 2024, including the confidential annex were approved as an accurate record to be signed by the Chair.	
5.	**Matters arising**	
5.1	The Matters Arising Report was reviewed: 6.6 – *The VPF&CS to bring an update on the revised values and the plan for roll out to the next Corporation meeting* – The plan for roll out had been finalised and would be launched at the Staff Summer Conference. 10.5 – *The VPF&CS to consider aligning the revised College values with the values set out in SO1* – The language within SO1 would be updated to align with the revised values; this version would be presented in July. 11.9 – *The Clerk to consider training for Governors on the new AoC Code* – There remained to be no training materials available on the new AoC Code.	
5.2	Members requested that a timescales column be added to the Matters Arising table and that deadline dates be specified.	

5.3	**ACTION:** The GD to add a timescales column to the Matters Arising table.	**GD**

Effective Governance *(SR2, SR8, SR9)*		
6.	**Chief Executive Officer's Report**	
6.1	The CEO signposted the Governors to the following papers as part of the pack, highlighting their importance: • Agenda Item 12(a) Draft Accountability Statement • Agenda Item 15(b) Annual ED&I Report • Agenda Item 15(h) Q&S minutes of Meeting	

Link Governor		
7.	**Link Governor Visit – SEND & ALS**	
7.1	The SEND Link Governor had met with the Head of Disability Services and the Designated Safeguarding Lead to discuss the regional and national landscape for SEND and ALS and to learn more about the provision and approach to learning, teaching and assessment in this area. The Link Governor advised that a new SEND toolkit had been developed by the team which was to be used across the College and suggested that a report on the new SEND toolkit could be presented to the Corporation at a future meeting. The Link Governor commended the amazing work done in this area and highlighted that the College had a positive working relationship with Bradford Council.	
8.	**Data dashboard**	
8.1	The VPF&CS presented the data dashboard, highlighting that it was an update on activity in Q2.	
8.2	**Q. Would you consider separating the items rated red for clarity and focus?** A. We would expect challenge of red-rated areas by the various Committees, where the Exec Leads can provide assurance. If there are areas of concern, members should request a supporting report.	
8.3	Members had an in-depth discussion about how information could be better shared across Committees to ensure discussions were progressive and not duplicative. It was acknowledged that this would be a focus within the upcoming Corporation Training and	

	Development Session. It was recognised that discussion and challenge was reflected in the Committee minutes which offered assurance. The Chair requested that going forward, commentary be added to the dashboard and suggested that the comments could be as simple as acknowledging a subject had been discussed at a specific Committee. This would assist with cross referencing across reporting.	
8.4	**ACTION**: Commentary inputs to be added to the Data Dashboard for assurance.	**SLT**
8.5	**Q. Why is there such a low usage on the Levy Funding?** A. The aim is to develop more Apprenticeships in our own workforce. Our current focus is on developing Apprenticeships within teaching. Information on how to utilise the levy funding is being presented within the business. A number of our apprentices have moved on to positive destinations, but not as many as we would like.	
8.6	Members agreed that the College should be a role model to other employers by pioneering the development of apprenticeships within the College's own departments. Members requested that the DPS provide a report, with a revised plan, to increase the levy funding usage. The target for this should also be revised within the Employer of Choice strategic plan (SO4) for the next academic year.	
8.7	**ACTION:** The DPS to provide a revised plan to increase levy funding usage and the target be revised within the Employer of Choice strategic plan (SO4) for 2025-26.	**DPS**
Committee Reports		
9.	**Search and Governance Committee – 16 January 2025**	
9.1	The Vice Chair of Search & Governance provided an update on: **a) Draft minutes of meeting – 16 January 2025** **b) Draft Annual ED&I Report** These were included in the pack for information and background.	
9.2	**c) ED&I Policy** No changes had been made to the ED&I Policy as part of its annual review. The S&G Committee recommend approval of the ED&I Policy to the board.	

9.3	**RESOLVED:** The ED&I Policy is approved.	
9.4	**d) Succession Planning** The S&G Committee made the following recommendations to the Corporation for approval: • Mussarat Ali takes on a 4-year term as Staff Governor to end in April 2029. • Fiona Thompson's term of office is renewed for a further 4-year term to end in March 2029. • John Williams' term of office is renewed for a further 4-year term to end in August 2029.	
9.5	**RESOLVED:** The three recommendations are approved.	
10.	**Finance & General Purposes Committee – 6 February 2025 and 13 March 2025**	
10.1	The Vice Chair of Finance & General Purposes Committee provided an update on: **a) Minutes of meetings – 6 February 2025 & draft minutes of 13 March 2025 (Inc CSIG mins for info)** **b) Budget Planning and Financial Health Objectives** These were included in the pack for information and background.	
10.2	The Vice Chair provided the following summary of both the February and March F&GP meetings: • The Overall Financial Health position remained 'Good'. • Capital programme spend, student recruitment and the mitigation on potential clawbacks/cash sweep were key areas of focus for the F&GP Committee. • The risk of T-Level clawback was lower than expected • Skills Injection Fund 1 – Spend had been halted to mitigate clawback due to the student recruitment position and projected student numbers for associated courses being lower than what was within the original bid. • Members had agreed to consult the Audit Committee to request that an audit of funding streams be annually carried out within the internal audit plan. • Early discussions had ensued on how to increase capacity for the areas of 16-18 provision that were currently showing as oversubscribed.	

	- HE remained under-recruited in the challenging market. Consequently, a HE Review had been recommended. The VPQT&L would lead on the HE Review and the resulting proposed direction would be provided to the Corporation for approval in May. - Many of the CSIG projects were at completion or at the project sign-out stage, including the replacement of all Trinity Green boilers as part of the energy efficiency grant spend, the close off of the ATC – PLW Relocation Project in February and the conclusion of the spend of both Skills Injection Funds. A contractual agreement had now been reached on the Garden Mills Final Accounts, meaning circa £225k of the provision made in the College Accounts could be released back into revenue. All other projects were noted to be on track. - In February, the Committee had approved that a pay rise of 2.5% be given to all staff with effect from March 2025 and backdated to August 2024. This was approved in line with the AoC recommendation. - The College had met the benchmark for the Great Place to Work accreditation. - The VPF&CS advised that the FTC Project was running 2 weeks ahead of schedule and that the Salix project was running 1 week behind. The Garden Mills Project was awaiting the installation of a fire door prior to sign off; a contractor to complete the work was being sought.	
11. 11.1	**Audit Committee – 27 February 2025** The Audit Committee Chair advised that the following had been included in the Corporation papers under items for information: a) **Draft minutes of meeting – 29 February 2024** b) **Internal Audit Reports - TIAA Annual Plan 2024/25** Subsequent to challenge, a revised version of the Health & Safety Internal Audit report had been accepted which had an overall conclusion of substantial assurance. The revision of the Health & Safety Internal Audit report had impacted the Internal Audit Annual Report which had been revised and recirculated. The Absence Management report had received an overall conclusion of substantial assurance which had been commended by Audit members. The Audit Committee had agreed to add a review area on student income streams into the Indicative Audit Strategy, where a different funding stream would be audited each year. A meeting with TIAA to	

	discuss the 25-26 Plan had been scheduled and the addition to the plan would be confirmed with the F&GP Committee.	
12.	**Quality & Standards – 6 March 2025** The Chair of the Quality & Standards Committee provided an update on:	
12.1	**a) Draft minutes of meeting – 6 March 2025** These were included in the pack for information and background. *L/SW*	
12.2	**b) Draft Accountability Statement** The VPQT&L had presented the Draft Accountability Statement to the Quality & Standards Committee. The Statement demonstrated how the curriculum was meeting local, regional and national skills needs and was aligned with the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). Limited updates had been made, with more substantive changes expected next year, as changes were anticipated in the revised LSIP and there was a plan to develop the 2026-27 version in September 2025. The Committee were recommending the draft Accountability Statement to the Corporation for approval.	
12.3	**Q. Has addition of the RAG rating to this year's Accountability Statement been intentional to demonstrate progression?** A. Yes, as some of the objectives extend over the 5-year cycle, this has been included to demonstrate progress against the longer-term actions recorded in the Plan.	
12.4	Members discussed how RAG ratings have the potential to be open to different interpretations and requested that the ratings be better defined to ensure there was a mutual understanding on measures/ targets.	
12.5	**ACTION:** The VPQT&L to clearly define the RAG ratings within the Accountability Statement.	**VPQT&L**
12.6	Members suggested that going forward, 'The Communities We Serve Data' be presented in line/bar charts rather than pie charts, so that movement over time could be more clearly illustrated. It was also requested that a note of explanation be added to the reporting on the relationship between levels of deprivation and 16-18 free school meal eligibility.	

Members discussed the growing PLW cohort and how the skills they need to progress are not as directly linked to trades or sectors but more to employability skills. It was recognised that the journey into work was often longer for this cohort and therefore further consideration was required on how to evidence their transformation where less quantifiable destination data was available in terms of vocational skills attainment.

The VPQT&L advised that the College had co-designed a survey with the Chamber of Commerce which aimed to provide insight into the non-perishable skills that employers want. It was suggested that the results of this could be used in future to demonstrate the College's contribution to wider 'soft' skills, rather than those that were purely vocational. This evidence base could be put forward as a context for curriculum delivery for this cohort, being closely linked to employer voice.

The CEO advised that an update to the Accountability Statement, triangulated with the survey results and revised LSIP, could be presented to the Corporation by March 2026, prior to the Annual Strategic Conversation.

12.7	**RESOLVED:** The Draft Accountability Statement is approved.
12.8	**c) Risk register update – for recommendation**

The Q&S Committee recommended the following changes to Corporation for approval:

- **SR5** – The addition of a reference to the HE Review to the commentary.
- **SR7** – Commentary to be added on the mitigation of the risk related to the increasing number of unqualified teaching staff.

| 12.9 | **RESOLVED:** The proposed changes to the Risk Register were accepted and approved by the Corporation. |

12.10   Members queried the decline in English and Maths attendance figures and were advised that this had been predominantly driven by attendance at Success Centres. Students had previously opted in to attend Success Centres, and this provision had had a real impact. In recognition of this, attendance had been made compulsory and part of the core study programme this year. The Q&S Committee had requested more granular detail on the split between classroom and Success Centre attendance and this would be presented and reviewed at the next meeting.

	Policies	
13.	None	

	Risk	
14.	**Strategic risk monitoring**	
14.1	The Corporation reviewed the strategic risk register. Each Committee had reviewed the risks for which they have oversight.	
14.2	**Q. Can you provide an update on the progress of the Cyber Essentials reaccreditation?** A. That is currently being worked on. One platform is causing some issues, but this is being dealt with and should be migrated to in June.	
14.3	**Q. Who is now responsible for SO7?** A. This will be the VPF&CS's responsibility in the short term. We also employed a new HoD for IT in January.	

	All Committees- For information only*	
15.	a. S&G Minutes of meeting- 16.01.25 b. Annual ED&I Report	
	c. F&GP Minutes of meetings – 6.02.25 & 13.03.25 d. CSIG minutes- 4.11.24/ 9.12.24/ 20.1.25	
	e. Audit Minutes of meeting- 27.02.25 f. TIAA Annual Plan 2024/25	
	g. Q&S minutes of meeting 6.03.25	

	Reports from Subsidiaries/Joint Ventures/Committees*	
16.	The minutes from the following were shared within the meeting papers for information:	
16.1	a) Equality & Diversity Committee – 12.12.24 b) Health, Safety & Welfare Committee – 5.12.24 c) Joint Consultative Committee – 7.11.24	
16.2	**Q. Can you provide an update on the efficiency day matter noted in the JCC minutes?** A. We are expecting to receive a failure to agree notice on this. The change of date for the efficiency day was due to a business need linked to enrolment and will facilitate a College closure date for Eid to support the students.	

	Closed session with independent governors	
	The CEO, Executive, GD, Staff and Student Governors left the meeting. *Governors agreed that the Deputy Governance Director should remain throughout the confidential session.* *A separate confidential minute was recorded – see annex.*	

17.	**Extraordinary Remuneration Committee – 13 February 2025**	
17.1	The Chair of the Remuneration Committee provided an update on:	
	a) Draft minutes of the meeting – 13 February 2025	
	These were included in the pack for information and background.	
	b) Senior Post Holder (SPH) pay increase recommendation	
	See confidential annex	

Matters of note		
18.	**Any other business**	
18.1	Members had a detailed discussion on the use of AI within the FE sector and more specifically within the College, and how innovation and digitalisation should be further considered.

Members acknowledged the high volume of information available on how to protect integrity within the area of AI, but noted that there was less available on its potential uses and usefulness to the education sector in general. Members agreed that the College should be pioneering digitalisation and looking at how it could embrace the technology available to futureproof itself and benefit its stakeholders. Becoming more strategic and driving policy in this area was recognised as important. It was raised that further consideration should be given both to how to ensure digitalisation facilitates staff to do their jobs better and how it enables pedagogy. As AI was developing exponentially and at pace, members agreed that that College needed to act swiftly. Members commended the digital strategy (SO7) that had been presented at the Strategic Planning Event and agreed that this should be refreshed. | |
18.2	**ACTION:** The Chair and the GD to discuss the introduction of an AI policy with the SLT.	**Chair / GD**
18.3	The Chair advised that the Corporation Training & Development session was taking place on the 10 April and encouraged members to attend.	
18.4	There was no other business.	
18.5	The Chair closed the meeting at 18:40.	

19.	**Meeting Evaluation**	
19.1	Link to the meeting evaluation form to be circulated via email.	**DGD**

Approved by the Corporation:

J. Williams   **22.05.25**

Signed by the Chair   Date

Agreed Actions

No	Minute	Action	Who?
1	5.3	The GD to add a timescales column to the Matters Arising table.	GD
2	8.4	Commentary inputs to be added to the Data Dashboard for assurance.	SLT
3	8.7	The DPS to provide a revised plan to increase levy funding usage and the target be revised within the Employer of Choice strategic plan (SO4) for 2025-26.	DPS
4	12.5	The VPQT&L to clearly define the RAG ratings within the Accountability Statement.	VPQT&L
5	18.2	The Chair and the GD to discuss the introduction of an AI policy with the SLT.	Chair/GD
6	19.1	Link to the meeting evaluation form to be circulated via email.	DGD