

**Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on 28 March 2023  
at the GBSIoT Hub [Greater Birmingham & Solihull Institute of Technology Hub],  
Holt Street, Birmingham at 5.00 pm [& pre-meeting tour of the IoT Hub at 4.40 pm]**

**Present**

Christine Abbott  
Scott Beasley  
Tasleem Chaudary  
Rebecca Gater [Principal & Chief Executive]  
Vic Gwozdz [FE Student Governor]  
Sarah Horton-Walsh  
Barbara Hughes [Chair of Governors]  
Ravi Kumar  
Lucy Lee  
Tony Lucas [Joint Vice-Chair of Governors]  
Amirun Nehar  
Donna Poole [Staff Governor]  
Geraldine Swanton  
Harrison Thompson

**In attendance**

Heather Evans [Deputy Principal]  
Pete Haynes [Vice Principal HR and Student Services]  
Lee Jamieson [Vice Principal Quality and Curriculum]  
Neil Brayshaw [Interim Vice Principal Skills, Curriculum Innovation & Partnerships]  
  
Sam Bromwich [Director of Corporate Governance, Risk & Compliance]  
  
Anita Suman [Shadow Governor]  
Micky Burke [GBSIoT Operations Director]  
Ahmed Hussein [Head of School Engineering]

The Chair thanked IoT staff for the pre-meeting tour of the Hub, welcoming Micky Burke, the Hub's Operations Director as well as Ahmed Hussein, Head of School Engineering.

The Chair and one of the Vice-Chairs had attended today's EtF webinar "Meeting the Skills Need" - and members were reminded of the additional responsibilities of governors under the Skills Act to ensure that colleges have a plan, a strategy and a curriculum that meets their local skills needs.

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Paul Assinder and Vic Gwozdz. A leave of absence has been agreed for Sally Tomlinson.

**2. Declarations of Interest in relation to this agenda** – there were no new declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes of the previous Corporation Meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023**

The Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on 01 February 2023 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair [application of e-signature].

**3.1. Matters Arising**

**HE Student Governor** – the need to recruit a new HE Student Governor was noted, following the resignation of Chloe Sims. The Director of Corporate Governance, Risk & Compliance reported she is working with the current FE Student Governor and the Student Enrichment

team to recruit and also on succession planning for when the terms of office ends for the current FE Student Governor.

**Student attendance** – in a lengthy discussion, the Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum reported the results of College’s anonymous student survey that had a 60%-plus return; mental health, anxiety, illness and health, being significant factors identified by many respondents. The number one reason was mental health at 33%. Time-keeping and organisational skills were also reported as issues – all of which provide a basis for some actions that College can implement.

**Q Do you have any indications from secondary school about such factors – or are they post-Pandemic issues?**

A For some safeguarded-learners there may be a transference of files, but this is where there is a safeguarded learner not necessarily where there’s a health / mental health issue.

**Q Are you certain that it is not all about the transition to College?**

A That is something that can be explored further to feedback into College’s ‘at-risk’ processes. Identifying starting points for young people is key and recent input from Ian Smith, the external Consultant, suggests that a ‘blank-sheet’ approach is ideal, with awareness of the barriers-to-learning that may already be apparent, so that we can adapt our curriculum for certain learners.

**Q Is there any scope to have ‘how-are-you-feeling?’-type discussions with 16–18-year-olds during early stages?**

A College’s interview process is already fairly robust, strengthened by measures such as ‘keep-warm’ activities, and students coming into College to meet staff and familiarise themselves with the learning environment. We tend to put much work into the lower-achieving students. Additionally, there is the induction programme for students. Overall, a lot of work is already done on mental health and on ways to reduce students’ anxieties. Perhaps it would be the early intervention process where more work could be focused.

**Q How does College compare to others, is the data consistent with other regional colleges, or is this a particularly local issue?**

A A number on this can’t be given but it is certainly recognised that mental health challenges are rising exponentially for young people. We already work with local schools and as Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum, I sit on the Solihull School Board and also attend Heads in the South Warwickshire Region, and although numbers aren’t discussed per se, behaviours are – with discussion for instance, on the noted increase in eating disorders in part of the region. College’s position seems to be consistent in terms of the national picture, and anecdotal feedback from other colleges appears to show that College’s attendance figures are average.

The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum noted that impact on attendance was possibly the ‘cost’ of retaining struggling students who might otherwise have left, and the considerable work needed to achieve that retention, which overall, felt the ‘right thing to do’.

**Q Returning to the issue of finding out what the starting points are, how will we get this data and is there a sense of setting this up for failure if that data can’t be established?**

A Some schools do already share this data and references for each learner are an entry requirement for College, but it is post-enrolment that is the opportunity to open dialogues with students early on. The Head of School Health & Social Care noted that increasingly, students identified mental health and anxiety issues during the application and interview stages, giving staff a heads-up enabling better planning for induction, the curriculum and support levels.

The Chair reminded colleagues that the Governors' Dashboard can be used to look at attendance rates by School and then by curriculum area. She welcomed the good work being done in College as well as the analysis of the complex factors around attendance levels.

### 3.2. Actions

**Qualifications Reforms** - Tuesday 02 May is the confirmed date for the third Governor Briefing session at 5.00 pm on Teams, for which calendar invites have been sent [*the HE Briefing session is similarly booked for 18 April*].

**Treasury Management Annual Report and Policy update** - as agreed at the last meeting, the Deputy Principal is rewording the Treasury Management policy and will take to Audit Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

**Anti-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Policy** – as agreed at the last meeting, the Deputy Principal and Director of Corporate Governance are meeting on 19 April to look at the Anti-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption procedure.

### 3.3. Top Risks

The Chair briefly summarised the various changes to risk-scoring shown in the Top Risks spreadsheet. It is now proposed to remove the new risk that had been suggested as an addition for Audit Committee. She noted that the confidential Top Risks document which covers the Principal and Governance Professional roles provides good assurance and shows a downward trend of related risks. Attention will be given to the format of the spreadsheet to improve their appearance on BoardEffect, as some detail is not always visible. **Action**

Strategic Plan Ambitions are now shown on each Corporation agenda [and in meeting minutes] to further embed the Strategic Plan throughout the organisation.

### STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2025

STRATEGIC AMBITION 1 – Deliver a high-quality curriculum that enhances the life opportunities of our learners, the inclusive growth of our communities, and the productivity of the employers with which we work.

In the first two of a planned series of presentations by Heads of School to Corporation, a welcome was given to Ahmed Hussein, Head of School Engineering – and to Donna Poole, in her Head of School Health & Social Care role. After the meeting both presentations would be uploaded to BoardEffect for Governors to access.

## 4. Meeting Local Skills Need Presentation One : Engineering

Ahmed Hussein, the Head of School Engineering introduced his presentation, which gave background information to the common skills demands in the engineering sector, top of which was 'communications skills'. He also covered reforms in the School of Engineering, the need to embed knowledge, skills and behaviour into curriculum design, as well as the need for collaborative work with employers. Following the presentation, Ahmed welcomed questions from Governors.

**Q The Engineering Board meeting in May 2023 – is that the first time a board of engineering employers has been convened? If so, that is a real positive, based on previous feedback from the last Ofsted Report. Collaboration with employers was highlighted in today's EtF Webinar on Meeting the Local Skills Need, so this is to be welcomed.**

A Yes – as far as I know, this is the first time for such a board and initially I think it will be with eight companies. I plan to hold the next meeting in College in September with more companies and keep the momentum going forward.

**Q Thank you for a really interesting presentation. I share the understanding of communication skills being so key throughout education, but can you further explain what you have put under the ‘behaviours column’ section of your presentation?**

A It is perhaps best to see communication and problem-solving sitting alongside the other necessary skills, such as the gaining of knowledge, demonstration of professional behaviour in the workplace, etc. It is hoped that learners will develop all of these skills at the same time.

**Q Collaboration with employers is to be welcomed, but do you have any plans to talk with other providers? based on the thinking that if there is a ‘need’, surely it is best for colleges to specialise, so that not each college attempts to meet the same need through duplicated provision?**

A Yes and very recently we had meetings with BMET and South & City Colleges.

A Links with the IoT [Institute of Technology] is exactly that sort of collaboration. Engineering is probably the School where we have the strongest levels of collaboration and partnership, with sixth-forms, colleges and universities – and we have the IoT Strategy. We will look at an engineering and manufacturing strategy for the area where the ‘hub and spokes’ will provide the right level of complementary, rather than competitive, collaboration.

As part of the ongoing Local Skills Improvement Plans, College is required to have strategic discussion about curriculum areas and the IoT, bringing together seven educational providers, which is a prime example of that commitment to such collaboration.

**Q How does College engage with colleges who are not in the IoT particularly if they have either complementary or competitive offers?**

A None in Greater Birmingham and Solihull – apart from the smaller sixth-forms possibly.

A However, pathways-in can be offered by any other providers, and this is part of the work College already undertakes with secondary school and others – and ‘IoT-flavoured’ courses can be tailored at L2 and L3 to give further opportunities and a joined-up approach for all concerned, learners for whom career potential can be mapped for several years ahead, for the IoT itself and for local employers so desperate to fill skills vacancies. Brexit and Covid have further prompted the need to focus on the development of those skills again as well as approaches to recruitment and development of learners.

**Q Non-technical skills seem to be the priority for employers: do employers assume that a candidate’s qualification[s] mean they have the relevant technical skills, even if they don’t possess the necessary ‘soft skills’? If so, are those soft skills now being built into qualifications, or is this College’s discretionary response to helping meet the local need?**

A Approaches to this issue are still being carefully considered to find ways to change and to include soft skills in curriculum and assessment as it is not being built into qualifications yet.

It is crucial to develop learners’ capabilities to change and to raise their awareness of the need to update their skills in line with fast-paced changes in the sector.

**Q From a higher education experience and in the past, barriers to the development of a more innovative curriculum in engineering seemed to come from the professional bodies, those that give accreditation to specific curriculum courses for instance. Is that still the case, or has that changed?**

A Things are moving in the right direction but the pace of change is not as swift as it could be and can cause tension.

**Q Just a check on what is meant by ‘communications’?**

A All aspects – reading, writing, people skills, customer service communication skills and those within teams and colleagues.

**Q Do you feel you have the right resources to deliver what is needed or do you see any gaps in the months ahead whether that be money or staff?**

A The main issue is staffing and the nature of engineering as a fast-growing and changing area, means that upskilling staff is always key. Staff know what the challenges are and continue to work on them.

A Staffing is a national challenge and there is a sense of competing for the same people, with universities attracting people from colleges and then employers attracting people from the universities. Engaging with, and encouraging, industry to second their specialist staff back to communities is one way to approach this, as is drawing on our strong stakeholder relationships.

Ahmed was thanked for his valuable presentation and for providing answers to Governors’ Questions.

**Meeting Local Skills Need**

**Presentation Two : Health and Science**

Donna Poole was welcomed in her capacity as Head of School Health & Social Care and she began her presentation by noting the commonality of language and intent between Ofsted and the NHS in identifying the right skills agenda in the health and social care sector. Celebrating the February 2023 Health & Social Care careers event in College, Donna showed a video to give a flavour of the day, attended by 27 employers and approximately 180 external visitors. Some employers offered job interviews on the day to interested applicants, six of whom have taken on a job offer with others currently at the interview stage. SMBC has an electric-bike-loan initiative that aims to help prospective employees travel to a workplace – and take up of that was reported to be positive. Other outcomes from strong existing relationships have been the offer of specific placements as well as traditionally hard-to-access ones, such as physiotherapy and occupational therapy - so another success for the School.

**Q Were any more careers fairs planned?**

A Yes there will be three per year.

**Q Were pay and conditions largely responsible for the decline in the social care workforce – and if so, has that situation improved?**

A Yes no doubt – and the impact of Covid has been considerable and especially so for some individuals at a personal level.

**Q We recognise the importance soft skills and embedding them in the curriculum: will they form part of the assessment of students in Health & Social Care?**

A Yes – and some formative assessments are going to take place and Health & Social Care is lucky to have two ‘skills labs’, one at Woodlands and one at Blossomfield with a Stratford one being developed – skills labs where students can practise and demonstrate all of their learning.

**Q Who are the biggest employers in the health sector in the Midlands?**

A Domiciliary care is quite extensive at the moment and also the mix of local authority and private-provision care homes, where it has been a struggle to regain ‘entry’ in terms of placements for students with Covid restrictions still in place for many homes, although hopefully reducing in the near future.

**Q Your SAR shows “reasonable” contribution. Is this still the case?**

A No it is now “Strong”.

The Chair thanked Donna for her very positive presentation that celebrated many successes in her area and especially for the examples which helped Governors’ understanding of what local employers are doing.

**5. IoT Report**

The GBSIoT Operations Director reported the following:

**The Hub : Capital Project closedown**

Full handover of the GBSIoT Hub and the final capital claim for the Hub building both expected by 31 March; GBSIoT team are working closely with SCUC finance colleagues to ensure a successful project closure. DfE has given outline permission for an underspend of £30k on the £2m, to be used only for specialist ‘kit’ at the Hub, so work is currently underway to identify best spend plans, likely to include additional screens in the factory for teaching and for some additional specialists. Final capital project cost report to be provided at the next SCUC Board meeting.

**Relicensing** – positive soundings are reported from DfE about relicensing and is a process likely to start from September 2023. The current license for GBSIoT runs until July 2024. What GBSIoT would actually sign up to is the matter of much current discussion, given that the organisation is at a different stage to the ‘bidding’ one of recent years, but also because of the changed landscape and the dialogue about the shared licence and its duration. The implications of this complex decision require further consideration for the College, for other partners and employers.

**GBSIoT Five-Year Strategy** – this is noted to be under development with the aim of supporting the relicensing process, responding to changes in the skills and funding landscape and the organisational and staff changes across the GBSIoT.

For Governors’ awareness and information, the Operations Director highlighted a couple of areas:

**SLAs [service level agreements]** – All SLAs with Aston and Solihull for the provision of supporting services and been formally agreed and signed with the exception of the Digital SLA GBSIoT has two in place with College for finance and HR support, but also SLAs with Aston University and others. **The Digital SLA** in particular has become a more complex set of arrangements in terms of ownership, accountability and risk. There is shared acknowledgement that this needs a resolution and is something that is currently being worked on.

**Cyber Security** – This has been a very complex area for the IoT and is currently being worked on by all partners and their IT teams. There is a need to co-ordinate all of the policies, IT software and resources to mitigate cyber risks.

**GBSIoT end-of-year accounts** – the accounts were presented to the GBSIoT Board slightly later than anticipated and will be on the agenda for the next board meeting, with a dedicated time slot to allow full discussion, following which a report to Corporation will be given. **Action**

**GBSIoT Risk Strategy** – changes referenced earlier will be taken into account, along with any other factors and this is being drafted currently for presentation to the next IoT board meeting and again, back to Corporation in due course. **Action**

**GBSIoT Digital Experience Launch** – this will take place after Easter and uses some funding from the GBSLEP [Local Employment Partnership] for digital platforms, resulting in the exciting development of a ‘digital version of the Hub’, a 360-degree interactive experience, targeted at the young and diverse population of Birmingham and a great marketing and recruitment tool.

**Q Noting that it's still 'early days' for the Hub, is any qualitative evaluation being done or planned with its members as to the impact of their partnership in the Hub?**

A This has been an aim for a while and a couple of strategy sessions have attempted to elicit the value that partner institutions place on what they get out of their membership. It is hoped that actual usage will demonstrate this more clearly. This is on the to do list. **Action**

**Q On the relicensing – is there the freedom to opt for a five-year, ten-year or even an enduring licence?**

A As a national group, this entails going back to the Department of Education to lobby, noting that no other educational institution has to apply to keep going every five years or so. It causes problems for partners and employers.

**Q Are all of the members still equally committed?**

A Each of the seven is highly committed and very engaged, but it would be difficult to confirm that there was an *equal* commitment. There is certainly no disengagement.

**Q Are all board members committed and is the board functioning well? With the two sets of minutes provided, the BCU member was absent for both meetings.**

A Yes they are. The BCU member happened to be out of the country for those meetings.

**Q During the Hub tour earlier, you showed Governors the work around the mobile phone. Is this something you are developing as an expertise – and are you as much at risk of cyber-attack as everyone else, or is that expertise also being developed as part of the IoT?**

A It is part of the plan to develop those skills going forward. Last week a full-day cyber security-themed session was held with Siemens.

**Q Do you have mitigations in place for cyber security?**

A Trustmark is the company responsible for all of the install, providing a helpful series of mitigations and firewalls and they are working on a long-term solution.

The Chair thanked the GBSIoT Operations Director for his report and responses to Governors' questions.

## **6. Quality Curriculum, Teaching & Learning:**

The Vice Principal Quality and Curriculum [VPQ&C] outlined a twenty-minute interactive session for Governors only, covering all of the related reports under this item, after which he invited questions and comments from members. The session was following up on work with Ian Smith [the External Consultant, who had attended the February 2023 Governors' Development morning] - and was essentially to reframe the journey to 'outstanding', to focus more on the quality of education for learners, not just the acquisition of qualifications, and to focus less on simply measuring compliance. Governors were also reminded that in the Quality Strategy had been presented to Corporation in November 2022. Working in small groups with the lists provided to them, members were invited to identify where:

- Governors need greater assurances in order to feel confident answering any related questions.
- Governors can find and use source information / data from the College's quality systems and processes.
- In order that the VPQ&C can work to improve processes and adapt policies, Governors could provide their own 'gap analysis' during the small-group discussions at today's meeting.

- 6.1: Gap Analysis Activity
- 6.2: Feedback from Ofsted Special Interest Group
- 6.3: QIP Spring Update 22/23
- 6.4: Deep Dive Report
- 6.5: In Year progress Report
- 6.6: Teaching & Learning Update
- 6.7: Governors' feedback from Learning Visits and Focus Groups (Verbal)

**Q** Ian Smith's point about the need to triangulate information is noted, but Governors engage in different ways, therefore not all covering the same area in the same way, as some do SAR validations, others Learning Visits, or Student Focus Groups, therefore, would it make better sense for Governors to "pair-up" to get a better idea of any emerging issues to address what could be seen as a lack of consistency, as Governors don't have a 'remit', or are especially 'trained' for this type of engagement? As a result, some Governors might feel that we are not discharging responsibilities adequately or making a valuable contribution.

**A** The Chair felt that the pairing idea is a good one in any event, and noted that it had already taken place for some of the Student Focus Groups when a more experienced Governor had acted in a 'lead role' with a newly-appointed Governor in an observer capacity. However, she reminded colleagues that Governors do not need to engage in an operational or 'directive' way.

One of the main concerns to emerge from the February 2023 Governors' Development morning was the need to find better ways to summarise the extensive range of sources of information and data that can identify whether students are having a good experience and whether they are succeeding – so that Governors can scrutinise all information and provide supportive challenges if needed. Hopefully, this would provide Governors with the necessary levels of assurance and help alleviate uncertainty as to whether the board's responsibilities were adequately discharged in terms of curriculum and quality issues.

**Q** Can all the same information be brought together in order to enable a better challenge from Governors?

**A** Deep dive reports are not currently shared with Governors but a summary could be given?

To further help Governors and to give a better idea of each School, it was **agreed** that individual 'deep-dive' reports for every School would be made available to Governors on a trial basis. **Action**

**Q** Would a dashboard for each School be the way to help visualise issues?

**A** A discussion as to qualitative and quantitative information followed, and the ongoing need to interpret and triangulate information was stressed.

Feedback from another Governor group favoured hearing more in the way of key trends and comparisons, as well as the marrying together of different indicators for common areas – and demonstrating the 'good stuff' from the earlier in presentations. Some Governors wanted to understand how something had been identified as either a strength or area-for-improvement. Information that was targeted and more succinct information was welcomed by Governors – not an increase in volume, as already some members struggled to keep up with the amount and variety available.

A slight 're-engineering' of the Governor Learning Visits / Student Focus Groups was suggested so that members are clearer as to the overall approach and their 'freedom' to engage with learners during the process, to avoid being 'managed'. For some guidance about classroom operation, the value of the Teaching & Learning Assessment Policy was highlighted, but noted that it remains a 'pressure' on any teacher when a Governor goes into a learning space to talk to students and see what is taking place.



A number of other concerns and questions were voiced that included whether:

- Governors understand the criteria by which the College is judged as many aspects are measurable and verifiable, but others not.
- The bar was being set too high? With the amount and complexity of information, having oversight and understanding of it all was felt to be a big 'ask' and that might especially impact on student governors, or on governor recruitment generally.
- It is necessary to know where students are on different points in the continuum, or just at strategic points during the academic year?

The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum felt that the essential question was “**are learners making progress from the start, and how is it known that they are learning and remembering more?**” He felt that complexity arose in trying to answer those 'simple' questions. The Chair noted that the variety of information provided gives Governors 'indicators' towards framing those answers – and that the 'brief' for Governors' [and their accountability] lay in asking about those indicators.

The Vice Principal Quality and Curriculum noted that his next steps would be to review Governors' comments and feedback and work on improving and adapting processes and policy. **Action**

## **STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2025**

**STRATEGIC AMBITION 2** – Secure the future of our organisation in a fast-changing sector through careful and appropriate income diversification and growth.

### **7. New Vice Principal post recruitment update**

The Principal confirmed that FE Associates would be used for the recruitment, the candidate information packs for which had just been uploaded to BoardEffect in time for the meeting. The advert for the post is likely to go live before Easter with a closing date of 09 May 2023, shortlisting on the afternoon of 12 May with a full day's schedule of interviews on 22 May. Governors were invited to volunteer their involvement with the shortlisting and interviews by emailing the Director of Corporate Governance.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2025**

**STRATEGIC AMBITION 3** – Create a high-performing culture that attracts and retains the best people, is fully inclusive, and has a happy and proud workforce.

### **8. Equality and Diversity**

#### **8.1 Feedback from EDI Special Interest Group [28 February 2023]**

The Vice Principal HR & Student Services reported that there had been a very good attendance at the recent SiG and that notes of the meeting would be made available in due course.

The data received at the SiG will go into the Annual Report. **Action**

#### **8.2 Review of Equality and Diversity Policy and Objectives**

Highlighted in green on the accompanying agenda item, Appendix 1, are proposed changes that reflect the revised Mission, Vision & Values in the Strategic Plan. Usually, the Equality Policy has to be approved annually, along with the College's Equality Objectives [Appendix 2] but are included here and reflect many recent developments such as the Black Leadership Group and the “Breaking Down Barriers” research. The “bringing your whole self to College” was felt to be a welcome and useful concept and one that has been expanded upon, as has the LGBTQ+ ‘declarations’ at the application and enrolment stage. The low 10% Black and Asian profile for apprenticeships was reported to reflect the regional and national picture – but an objective for College to work on further and take positive action to redress: the same profile for the student body is 35%. To signify intent, the EDI Objectives will now feature more prominently in the Annual Report, coming immediately after the Principal's foreword.

It was **resolved** to approve the:

**Equality and Diversity Policy** and the **Equality and Diversity Objectives**.

### 8.3 Update on Annual Report

Progress was reported to be underway on producing this annual and comprehensive report into which the data received at the recent EDI SiG on 28 February 2023 would be fed, with added commentary. Some of the news stories on the College website would also feature in the report.

**SEND Governor** [special educational needs and / or disability]. Following a brief introduction, it was noted that there was now a need for a SEND-lead-Governor, as required in FE practice. This role will have an overview of College's SEND provision with the lead Governor invited to attend meetings as arranged. The Chair invited colleagues to contact her outside the meeting should they also be interested in the role. She noted that she had already received one expression of interest.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2025

STRATEGIC AMBITION 4 – Deliver a considered but ambitious programme of investment underpinned by financial stability.

## 9. Property Update (Including Chair's Action)

### 9.1 Summer Works

In her summary report to the item, the Deputy Principal had detailed a number of updates on current property matters. For added background about the Heat Network project, the Chair noted that a recording of the recent Sustainability briefing for Governors was available for a time-limited period and had been uploaded to BoardEffect as a link [*in the Library section of the "Induction, Training & Briefings for Governors" workroom*].

To assist the turnaround with pricing and tendering in a fairly short timescale, Corporation was asked to approve the summer works projects for 2023, as detailed in Appendix 1. Consideration had been given to works with the biggest sustainability impact alongside others on the list compiled and scored by SLT on the following basis:

- Priority one – health & safety concern
- Priority two – required by the curriculum for September 2023
- Priority three – other priority works to improve the condition of buildings
- Priority four – other works

The total spend on the shortlist of projects is £1.8m, some of which is funded by DfE and some from College reserves [approx. £500k]. *The summary report 9.1 had been omitted from BoardEffect before the meeting – but would be added as a post-meeting upload.* **Action.** It was reported that the Interim Director of Estates is working through a longer-term plan, to which new projects would no doubt be added in due course – and with increased familiarity with the estate, the Director is undertaking various surveys, for instance, a recent review of CCTV, and other work on sustainability.

#### **Q The DfE capital funds for summer works – how much is that?**

A College has had three lots of DfE money:

- **£1.176m to improve condition of college estates**
- **£470k for energy efficiencies specifically**
- **£401k** [today's final payment] is 'mopping' up whatever remains of that DfE spending package and is based on a DfE-commissioned survey of all college buildings from which their report was used to allocate funds]. All of Solihull College's estates were surveyed in one day. The Stratford redevelopment project however, did attract capital funding.

Following discussion about the timescales for each of the spends [the first two above, by March 2025, with today's allocation by March 2026], further clarification was given about the proposed £1.8m total spend for summer works, as this comprises various funding streams, including DfE but also OfS [Office for Students] plus an amount from reserves. A further reprioritisation may take place if needed, once tender pricings are received.

Governors **approved** the spend on summer works.

### **Feedback from Property Special Interest Group 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023 and the Additional Property Special Interest Group 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023**

Notes of both Property SiG meetings will be available in due course.

- 10. Feedback from Governors' Development Morning 11<sup>th</sup> February 2023** – the Chair's summary report was uploaded to BoardEffect after the meeting. The report focused on preparation for Ofsted inspection, anticipated in the next 12-24 months. Updates from the Governors' Development morning also fed into discussion of other agenda items during the meeting.

### **11. Policies**

**11.1 : Recruitment & Retention Allowance**

**11.2 : Freedom of Speech Policy**

**11.3 : Concerns & Complaints Policy**

The above were received without further discussion and it was:

**Resolved** to approve the:

- **Recruitment & Retention Allowance Policy**
- **Freedom of Speech Policy**
- **Concerns & Complaints Policy**

### **12. Confidential item – Pay Award [verbal update – including Chair's Action]**

*The above item was deemed confidential and the Staff Governor left the meeting during discussion.*

*Tony Lucas also left the meeting at this point.*

### **13. For information items**

**13.1 : Bids and Project**

**13.2 : PMR – January 2023**

**13.3 : Tender Update Report**

**13.4 : Use of the College Seal and e-Signatures**

**13.5 : Tuition Fees 2023-2024**

**13.6 : Procurement Termly Update**

The above reports were received by Corporation for information.

### **14. Any other Business**

#### **Membership**

- It was **resolved** to extend the term-of-office for Tony Lucas for one further term, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2023 to: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2027

- Joan Smith's resignation in March 2023 as External Member of the Search & Governance Committee was received – and thanks expressed to Joan for her long service as an External Governor and her support as a loyal friend of the College. It is intended that a full Corporation member will fill the vacancy on the Search & Governance Committee. **Action**
- **Governor profiles on the College website – “Meet the Governor” videos.** The Chair of the Corporation and the Director of Corporate Governance have both done their videos for the website. Governors were invited to book sessions to record their personal video for uploading [please contact the governance team].
- **WMCA Shadow Governor initiative** – the Chair reported that it was Anita Suman's last meeting. Anita was thanked for taking part in the six-month WMCA's Shadow Governor initiative and for her attendance and commitment to the process.

## 15. Future Dates

- Governor Briefing Sessions
  - HE Briefing – Tuesday 18 April at 5.00 pm on Teams
  - Qualifications Reforms – Tuesday 02 May at 5.00 pm on Teams
- Learning Visits to book – Tuesday 09 to Friday 12 May
- Extraordinary Corporation meeting – Tuesday 09 May by Teams
- External Board Review – one-to-one interviews with Governors Mon 22 or Wed 24 May
- **Corporation – 25 May 2023 at Stratford**

The Chair ended the meeting by gauging the thoughts and reflections on the meeting of a few Governors present and of a member of EMT.

*The meeting closed at 7.45 pm*

Signed



Date 25 May 2023

Solihull College and University Centre

**Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on 28 March 2023  
at the GBSIoT Hub [Greater Birmingham & Solihull Institute of Technology Hub],  
Holt Street, Birmingham at 5.00 pm [& pre-meeting tour of the IoT Hub at 4.40 pm]**

<b>Present</b>	<b>Christine Abbott Scott Beasley Tasleem Chaudary Rebecca Gater [Principal &amp; Chief Executive] Sarah Horton-Walsh Barbara Hughes [Chair of Governors] Ravi Kumar Lucy Lee Amirun Nehar Geraldine Swanton Harrison Thompson</b>
<b>In attendance</b>	<b>Heather Evans [Deputy Principal] Pete Haynes [Vice Principal HR and Student Services] Lee Jamieson [Vice Principal Quality and Curriculum] Neil Brayshaw [Interim Vice Principal Skills, Curriculum Innovation &amp; Partnerships]  Sam Bromwich [Director of Corporate Governance, Risk &amp; Compliance]</b>

**12. Confidential item – Pay Award [verbal update – including Chair’s Action]**

*The above item was deemed confidential and the Staff and Student Governor left the meeting during discussion.*

*Tony Lucas also left the meeting at this point.*

**12.1 : confidential Chair’s Action Pay Award March 2023**