

## CORPORATION AGENDA

Tuesday 19 November 2024, 5.30pm in Suite 3 of the Employer Hub

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Governors are reminded of the College's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and the need to consider these issues, along with health and safety, in all Corporation business.

- 5.30pm 1. **Confidential for Corporation Members Only under Section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act: Application for the Role of Student Governor** (paper LMC/S/08/24 refers) (for approval)

### Standing Items

- 5.35pm 2. **Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

- 5.36pm 3. **Declarations of Conflict of Interests**

Governors must declare any interest in any agenda items, where there could be a conflict of interest. For any such declaration, they may be requested to withdraw from the meeting for the discussion/decision on that specific item and will not be eligible to vote on the matter under discussion.

- 5.37pm 4. **Draft Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 29 October 2024** (paper LMC/C/18/24 refer) (for approval)

- 5.39pm 5. **Matters Arising:**

- Mandatory Responsibilities; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Health and Safety and Safeguarding (including Prevent)
- Corporation Action Checklist (paper LMC/C/19/24 refers) (for agreement)

### Strategic

- 5.41pm 6. **Principal's Strategic Overview** (paper LMC/C/20/24 refers) (for discussion)

### Performance

- 5.56pm 7. **Progress and Performance Report** (paper LMC/C/21/24 refers) (for discussion)

- 6.15pm 8. **Marketing Analysis of Enrolment 2024** (paper LMC/C/22/24 refers) (for discussion)

- 6.30pm 9. **Corporate Services Report** (paper LMC/C/23/24 refers) (for discussion)

- 6.45pm **Comfort Break (includes Knowledge Question)**

- 7.15pm 10. **Review of Comments, Compliments and Complaints 2023/24** (paper LMC/C/24/24 refers) (for discussion)

### Statutory

- 7.25pm 11. **Annual Staffing Report, including Staff Survey Outcomes** (paper LMC/C/25/24 refers) (for discussion)

- 7.40pm 12. **Annual Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting** (paper LMC/C/26/24 refers) (for discussion)

## Consent

7.45pm **13. Items for Approval**

- People and Wellbeing Strategy (*paper LMC/C/27/24 refers*)
- Complaints and Compliments Feedback Policy 2024/25 (*paper LMC/C/28/24 refers*)
- Gender Pay Gap Report (*paper LMC/C/29/24 refers*)

## Information

7.46pm **14. Any Other Business**

- Governor Feedback on Events Attended

7.47pm **15. Dates and Times of Next Meetings**

- Tuesday 03 December 2024, 5.30pm in Suite 3, Employer Hub
- Tuesday 14 January 2025 (*Governors' Training*)

7.48pm **16. Confidential item for Corporation Members Only, Excluding Staff and Student Governors, under Section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act: Draft Minutes and Papers of the Remuneration Committee Meeting held on 05 November 2024**

- Annual Report 2023/24 of the Remuneration Committee (*paper LMC/R/03/24 refers*) (*for receipt*)
- Annual Review of Governance Adviser's Role, Independence and Resourcing (*paper LMC/R/05/24 refers*) (*for agreement*)

## **NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON 19 NOVEMBER 2024**

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<b>Present:</b>	Hilary Fordham ( <i>Chair</i> )	)	
	Agata Estkowska	)	
	Lee Lawson	)	External Governors
	Jonathan Powell	)	
	Lindsay Price	)	
	Jane Taylor	)	
	Alaina Byrne	)	Student Governor
	Becky Davenport	)	Academic Staff Governor
	Beverley Martindale	)	Support Staff Governor
	Danny Braithwaite	)	Principal
<b>In attendance:</b>	Peter France		Vice-Principal Finance and Resources
	Charlotte Rawes		Vice-Principal Progress and Performance
	Oona Cushen		Governance Adviser and Clerk

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### **STANDING ITEMS**

#### **APPLICATION FOR THE ROLE OF STUDENT GOVERNOR**

C/24/076 This is a confidential item for Corporation Members only, under section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act. Paragraphs C/24/077 to C/24/078 are, therefore, minuted separately.

**Alaina Byrne joined the meeting.**

#### **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

C/24/079 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and all present introduced themselves. All papers will be taken as read to allow maximum discussion time.

C/24/080 Apologies for absence were received from Yak Patel, Gary White and Steve Wood.

#### **DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

C/24/081 Conflicts of interests were declared for Lee Lawson (employer is a subcontractor for the College), Jon Powell (partnership work with Lancaster University and Director of Lancaster and Morecambe Chamber of Commerce).

#### **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 29 OCTOBER 2024**

C/24/082 The Chair referred members to paper LMC/C/18/24 and advised that there were some minor typing amendments, which would be corrected for the file copy.

**C/24/083 The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 29 October 2024, paper LMC/C/18/24, subject to the minor amendments, were agreed as a true and accurate record.**

## **MATTERS ARISING**

Mandatory Responsibilities: Health and Safety, Safeguarding (including Prevent) and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND))

C/24/084 This item provides Governors or senior leaders with the opportunity to raise any concerns that have arisen since the previous meeting, in regard to the Corporation's statutory responsibilities, which are not covered within the standard reports. There were no items raised that were not covered within the main reports.

### Corporation Action Checklist

C/24/085 The Governance Adviser referred members to paper LMC/C/19/24 and advised that the information sent through from Marketing was very generic and did not cover the areas requested. This has been sent back to the marketing team for a revision. The action plan arising from the External Board Review is in progress and will be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

In response to Governors' scrutiny and challenge, the following points were highlighted:

C/24/086 The request for marketing information has been ongoing for quite a long time and should be concluded as soon as possible.

**C/24/087 The Corporation discussed and agreed the Corporation Action Checklist, subject to word changes; paper LMC/C/19/24.**

*ACTION: Governance Adviser to add External Board Review Action Plan to the next meeting's agenda.*

*ACTION: Governance Adviser to closer liaise with Marketing to provide the information requested as soon as possible.*

## **STRATEGIC**

### **PRINCIPAL'S STRATEGIC OVERVIEW**

C/24/088 The Principal referred members to paper LMC/C/20/24 and advised that the report reflects on the Government's budgetary announcements and the impact on the sector and on LMC. At the Association of Colleges (AoC) conference, it was also announced that the sector would be given the 'Pensions Guarantee' in relation to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and further information will be provided in due course. Colleges have not been explicitly mentioned in previous budgets, so it was encouraging that the sector was mentioned in regard to skills, and, importantly, a commitment of £300m allocation towards 16-18 funding plus additional capital spend. The Department for Education (DfE) has commissioned a condition survey of the sector, and this will be a good opportunity for LMC to outline concerns on the estate to their representatives. Concerns will be supported through the existing campus vision and strategy. The previous condition survey over-estimated the condition of the College's estate, i.e. it gave a more favourable picture than was the case. This time, the College will ask its own surveyor to accompany the Department for Education (DfE) representatives and challenge, where necessary, to ensure that the categorisation accurately reflects the condition of the buildings. The College has a clear strategy and direction of travel for the estate and the survey will provide a window of opportunity for capital funding.

C/24/089 The Skills Minister, Jacqui Smith, has confirmed that the sector will get funding support for the increase in employers' National Insurance (NI) contributions, but how much this will be and for how long has yet to be determined. The team is only working with the baseline of information that is currently available. The additional funding will not be released by the Treasury until April 2025, so this must be factored into considerations for any financial commitments.

In response to Governors' scrutiny and challenge, the following points were highlighted:

C/24/090 It is unlikely that the condition survey will focus on speculative projects or aspirations. When the previous condition survey was undertaken by the Department for Education (DfE), this was a simple categorisation of the condition of every colleges' buildings and estate followed by an allocated pot of money based on a formula.

C/24/091 Last year, the College received an additional £400k, based on a one-off base rate increase, which wholly went towards the 6.5% staff pay award. Additional funding for LMC should equate to circa £440k for the College. The concern is that the extra £300m nationally will be fully consumed in just funding growth in learner numbers across the country. Many colleges have grown significantly and campus space is tight for, so colleges are being vocal about needing extra capital money to extend and build. The condition survey is an opportunity for capital, not just for big colleges and more space, but also the help smaller colleges with the condition of buildings.

C/24/092 The full year impact of the increase to employers' National Insurance (NI) contributions will be circa £250k, and around a quarter of that for this year as it only comes into effect from April 2025. The biggest impact relates to the reduction in threshold. There will be additional funding to cover the increase, but details are still awaited.

C/24/093 There was a successful visit to the College by the newly elected Member of Parliament (MP) for Morecambe and Lunesdale, Lizzi Collinge, who, along with the Member of Parliament (MP) for Lancaster and Wyre, Cat Smith, is a supporter of the College. The Principal will have regular meetings with both Members of Parliament (MPs). Ms Collinge was keen to learn more about the sector and any priorities where she could provide support. The visit included a strategic tour of the campus. Ms Collinge will also be visiting the award-winning Multiply project. Both Members of Parliament (MPs) know that the College's reach is broader than just 16-18 year olds, being anchored with employers, apprentices and the wider community, and particularly the work with disadvantaged communities. Ms Collinge was open about her limited knowledge of FE skills, but was very open to learning and understood the work the College was doing has lead to positive outcomes. Further Education was a personal pathway for Ms Collinge, so she is a fan of colleges in general. There were three key messages given by the Principal; a required increase to the base rate element of funding, the 'sticking plaster' approach with caveats need to cease and capital funding is required as there are aspects of the estate that are not currently fit for purpose.

- C/24/094 Information on the 16 Trailblazer projects, mentioned within the 'Get Britain Working' White Paper, is limited, but there may be opportunities for the College to be involved. There is always a delay between funding streams ending, e.g. Multiply, and detail being forthcoming from new announcements. This may be a new version of the project approach with a more targeted aim at core themes of concern. Some of the projects may, potentially, be around the Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) agenda, and the College has already done a lot of work in this area and is in a good position to put itself forward. There will be caveats to all of the projects. The revised Education Select Committee is now in place and needs to look at building infrastructure to upwardly mobilise the sector. The introduction of Skills England is moving at pace, an interim Chair has been appointed and has started to shape a team of people to move it forward. There has been a change in rhetoric and there is now more confidence in the lean towards ensuring the strategy for Skills England closely aligns with the Government's Industrial Strategy.
- C/24/095 There has been a degree of external scrutiny, via Pauline Hagen, for the whole College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and associated Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). Ms Hagen is a very experienced leader in Further Education and is an FE Adviser within the FE Commissioner's team, working closely with colleges in distress. Ms Hagen was assigned as a mentor to the new Principal. The Vice Principal Progress and Performance, along with all curriculum and support teams, has worked hard to get the draft report ready. The day was very productive, with Ms Hagen providing challenge on statements and actions, and helped to consolidate the team's thinking and focus on the College's strengths and areas for improvement.
- C/24/096 The Corporation received and discussed the Principal's Strategic Overview, paper LMC/C/20/24.**

## PERFORMANCE

### PROGRESS AND PERFORMANCE REPORT

- C/24/097 The Vice Principal Progress and Performance referred members to paper LMC/C/21/24 and advised that focus has been on completing the whole College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) ready for approval at Board in December. There are some anomalies and achievement gaps, which are currently being analysed. The key areas for focus on improvement are apprenticeships, adult English and maths plus plumbing, although there will be nuances as the information is scrutinised in more detail. There has been an increase in recruitment and, with this, an increase in safeguarding alerts. Growth in learner numbers has mainly been at Levels 1 and 2, with more of these learners requiring interventions, which has put pressure on the safeguarding and pastoral teams. 407 learners took the Autumn GCSE resit exams, and there were tight timescales to get exam access arrangements in place to give learners the best chance of passing, particularly for school progressions. Only those learners with a grade 3 and who just missed obtaining their grade 4 are entered for the Autumn series of exams. Schools have been responsive this year in terms of sending information, but this has to be double checked by the College.



C/24/098 The College has been successful in its funding bid for the teacher mentoring programme, being allocated £15k. This will allow three people to become teaching mentoring champions. These are Natalie Ashworth, Head of Performance and Improvement, Daniel Waterhouse Training and Development Lead in Residential Childcare and Libby Haughton, newly appointed Programme Area Manager for Health, Early Years and Business. The funding will allow the College to provide remission to new teaching staff. There was a successful visit from the Careers Enterprise Company (CEC). LMC was chosen as it is seen as sector leaders in careers work. The visiting team were on site for a day to see how the College has developed its Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) work. Since winning a national award last year, the College has done more work internally to continually develop this provision.

In response to Governors' scrutiny and challenge, the following points were highlighted:

C/24/099 Jane Taylor advised that she had met with the Head of Engagement, via her link role for careers, and had been very impressed with the work being done, which was very innovative and 'outside the box' in many ways and schools want to gain that knowledge. The College had not applied for the award, but had been identified by the Careers Enterprise Company (CEC). There is more that can be done, but the team is going from strength to strength. This came out in the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) review, with Ms Hagen challenging the College on being overly critical of itself, but there is a balance to be struck between being critical and being ambitious.

C/24/100 Multiply is a Government project that the College is part of through its partnerships with The Lancashire Colleges (TLC), Lancashire County Council and the Skills Employment Hub. The aims of the project are to support people in the area to gain more confidence with maths, through various courses, e.g. one-day Excel, cooking on a budget run in a community centre, budget courses in supported living, Functional Skills qualifications, Christmas canapes and games sessions etc. These have been a gentle way of introducing adults into the College in a familiar environment, with the aim that participants will then enrol at College to acquire a full qualification. External speakers are also brought in to deliver business start-up sessions with learners that have completed the course. The College was nominated for an award by The Lancashire Colleges (TLC) and was successful in winning the 'Best at Engaging Hard to Reach Participants' award. The College was chosen from many nominated colleges and training providers.

C/24/101 It was suggested that the College should consider a display cabinet, where awards and trophies can be prominently displayed, as the College needs to be more pro-active in celebrating its achievements, both internally and externally. Unfortunately, funding for the Multiply project will cease in March 2025, and will not be extended. Since September 2023, the College has engaged with almost 1,000 participants. The project has also supported improvement in adult achievement rates for maths. Adult funding will move to tailored learning, so there is an opportunity to look at ways in which the College can continue with this valuable work. The main tutor had been a teaching assistant in a local primary school and had been nominated for the 'Best Tutor' award. The project has also enabled the College to engage with organisations and community venues that it has not previously been able to, e.g. Marsh Community Centre and Lancashire women on probation. Participant numbers were increasing every week, so the College needs to find a way to continue this work.

- C/24/102 It is too early to see the implications of the change of pathway to the Rapid Assessment and Intensive Support Team (RAIST), but the withdrawal of direct referral with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) now being the gatekeeper is disappointing. There had been an instance where the College contacted the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) for an 18 year old learner, but they would not take them as due to age, whereas the Rapid Assessment and Intensive Support Team (RAIST) would have done. All involved have stated that a very positive support avenue has been taken away. There are different support routes for adults. Essentially, the Rapid Assessment and Intensive Support Team (RAIST) were overloaded and have had staff sickness, but are trying to recruit additional members. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services do not work weekends. The situation will be monitored closely.
- C/24/103 Governors who attended the apprenticeships meetings last year were aware that it had been impressed on staff on what actions they needed to put in place to improve delivery. There is a time lag on data outcomes, but these have improved by 2% for last year. From a College perspective, the improvement meetings need to remain in place, but all the indications show improvement, but this will take two to three years to impact the data. Feedback from another Governor was that the team does now have a grasp of the situation and is moving in the right direction. Apprenticeships has been graded as 'requires improvement' in the College Self-Assessment Report (SAR), and there are improvement plans in place. All of the senior team agree that the data do not yet provide evidence of good provision. In-year data does show a different picture, and achievement should be above national average by the end of this academic year.
- C/24/104 The lower attendance for females has followed through into lower outcomes for females, compared to males. The data will be further analysed to show differential by level and gender to identify the root problems and implement remedial action. Meetings with local secondary schools have also identified that female attendance in schools is also worse than male attendance. There is not one specific reason identified, so it will be a case of identifying other aspects to work on and trying a range of different actions, but schools do not have any answers. The College does have a higher proportion of males than females, but all safeguarding alerts are higher for females than males.
- C/24/105 Not all safeguarding alerts would require an intervention. For example, it may have been an alert from school on a learner's history but one that did not require intervention. Up to 23 November 2024, there had not been such an increase in alerts, but more learners have had interventions due to a change in need. Referrals from the Encompass scheme also may not require intervention, as these will be dealt with by Police. The percentage of learners requiring intervention work is quite high, but the correlation is that these are more complicated and complex cases.
- C/24/106 The Corporation received and discussed the Progress and Performance Report, paper LMC/C/21/24.**



## **MARKETING ANALYSIS OF ENROLMENT 2024**

C/24/107 The Vice Principal Progress and Performance referred members to paper LMC/C/22/24 and advised that the report relates to the current year, but will not correlate to the Individual Learner Return (ILR) funding submission as the report relates only to 16-18 learners at a snapshot in time. Learners over 19 but with and Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are included from a funding allocation perspective, but this report primarily focuses only on 16-18 learners. There has been an 11% increase in classroom-based recruitment, which is very positive and there are high application to enrolment conversion rates. This is in addition to the increased recruitment last year, and will partly be due to an increase in internal progressions and enrolments at Level 2. With an increase at Entry and Level 1, progression should also lead to increased numbers next year. The College's market share from local secondary schools has increased by 7%. Level 3 recruitment, however, has remained static and concerns remain around full-time adult numbers. The ongoing cost of living issues, and the after-effects of the pandemic, have led to adults not wanting to retrain on full-time courses.

In response to Governors' scrutiny and challenge, the following points were highlighted:

C/24/108 Governors were pleased with the increased conversion rate, and would welcome further promotional events with prospective students and their parents / guardians. The growth expected a few years ago did not materialise due to calculated grades etc., but growth over the past two years is evidence that on-site events are influential. A 30% increase in learners is very positive, but is a significant increase that has had to be managed.

C/24/109 Although there were some real positives within the report, it was noted that financial and professional services had poor recruitment relative to the size of the sector locally. Recruitment has reduced by 50% over the past four years, but this is a mismatch to the future employment market, which is increasing. One Governor advised that they had been unaware of apprenticeships when at school, as careers advice at school was always to push the A Level and university pathway. Apprenticeships were not given as an option, but learners would not have to take on a student loan. In particular, people are unaware that apprenticeships are available in accountancy. The Principal advised that there is a national issue in careers guidance, rather than this being a local issue. The financial and professional services dip relate to one full-time course only, linked to a BTEC in Business, which has now become a T Level in Business. There were applications for the T Level, but many of those that had applied did not achieve the grades required for the T Level and so moved to another pathway, including staying on at school.

C/24/110 The Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) will provide intelligence of what is needed, and there is an element of looking at whether that provision requires a revamp. The Programme Area Manager for this curriculum area has been off sick, but the team will look for changes in this area to help drive improvement. The traditional BTEC route has been superseded by T Levels, but not all young people are interested in those pathways. Learners who did that programme moved more towards digital and IT employment. The data is only relevant to the full-time course, and the College does offer apprenticeships in e.g. accountancy. Enrolments on these have not been included in the figures. It would be useful for Governors to have apprenticeship enrolment included in the future to provide some correlation.

- C/24/111 There are peaks and troughs for all areas at different times. The substantial increase in enrolments for hairdressing and beauty therapy may be attributed to last year's growth in Aspire provision, particularly for females, who may have progressed this year from Entry Level / Level 1 to Level 2 in that sector.
- C/24/112 Unique enrolments relate to individual learners, rather than number of applications, as many learners apply to several courses and across different curriculum areas.
- C/24/113 There will be regional data available on colleges' market share, but this will be for the previous academic year, as the data lags a year behind. The Association of Colleges (AoC) undertook a survey on enrolments nationally, with a substantial number of colleges reporting growth in 16-18 numbers, but some are in a more challenging position in regard to space on campus etc.
- C/24/114 The College had targeted marketing at Garstang Community Academy, due to the level of housing being built. Although there are no College buses running from Garstang, every learner from that area would be given a Stagecoach bus pass, regardless of income level. With the former Principal moving to Myerscough, growth from this area had not materialised. The school has a very good relationship with Myerscough College, which undertakes vocational tasters for the school one day a week.

**C/24/115 The Corporation received and discussed the Marketing Analysis of Enrolment 2024, paper LMC/C/22/24.**

**ACTION:** *Vice Principal Progress and Performance to include apprenticeship enrolments in future reports.*

**CORPORATE SERVICES REPORT**

- C/24/116 The Vice Principal Finance and Resources referred members to paper LMC/C/23/24 and advised that the I-Safe visit had to be cancelled due to adverse weather. The audit clearance meeting has taken place, with the external auditors not proposing any adjustments to the year-end accounts, so the figures will be as those reported at the previous meeting. The Audit Findings Report, along with the draft accounts, will be presented to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee next week, then to full Board in December. The College will achieve good financial health, which is a positive outturn. The confirmation of financial health from the Department for Education (DfE) is based on the College's Financial Forecasting Return (CFFR) submitted in July 2024. The September management accounts will be presented to the Board at the December meeting, but the accounts are showing a slightly better than budget position. There is a waiver form included as an appendix, related to new equipment required for the engineering T Level. The College received £729k in total from the Department for Education (DfE) for T Level equipment, of which £602k was for engineering. The equipment must have been purchased by 31 December 2024. The Programme Area Manager for Energy, Engineering and Construction has sourced the equipment, which is very specific, and only one supplier has been found that can provide the specification needed. As the cost of the equipment is over £100k, the expenditure requires formal Board approval.

C/24/117 The senior team is currently modelling various options for the pay award proposals due in December, one of which will be the Association of Colleges (AoC) recommendation, as well as any additional differential costs arising from the increase in the National Minimum Wage (NMW). There is a lot of work involved to prepare before the meeting in December.

C/24/118 The Director of HR Strategy and Support has not yet formally handed in her notice, and will be flexible on timings based on the recruitment process. There were four shortlisted applicants, with interviews scheduled for next week. The current post holder is prepared to continue into the new year, potentially up to Easter, to ensure there is a robust handover process, or to run a second round of recruitment if required. The College has undertaken its own recruitment process, but could use an external recruiter if the process was not successful. There were no internal candidates, as the deputy manager was satisfied in their current post.

In response to Governors' scrutiny and challenge, the following points were highlighted:

C/24/119 Any error over £17k would be reported as unadjusted within the Audit Findings Report, but there were no adjustments or no material errors being reported.

C/24/120 The September management accounts would be ready for presentation at the December meeting and it is normal for the accounts to run behind at this time of year. The team, including a new Head of Finance, will need a little time to catch up, as well as familiarise themselves with the new finance system. One staff member had been on long term sick, but is now on a phased return.

C/24/121 The Financial Regulations include a provision for a waiver application in exceptional circumstances for any transactions over £100k where a tender may be expected. Such circumstances may include where there is only one supplier for specialist educational equipment, or a defined timescale for provision. The Vice Principal Finance and Resources has been given the names of other suppliers contacted, but has taken the information at face value with no specific evidence of what has been undertaken.

C/24/122 Although there was no suggestion that actions had not been completed, the Board would wish to see some form of auditable evidence to underpin the one supplier justification. There also needed to be assurance that there were no conflicts of interest, e.g. personal ties or acceptance of gifts or hospitality etc. There have been a number of waiver requests where more information was required. Governors would wish to see, for example, detail of the specialist equipment required, a fuller explanation as why only one supplier, copy of quote obtained, and email evidence of firms contacted but unable to quote. The College could introduce a 'Single Supplier Justification' form, which could be used regardless of whether a waiver request was required. Governors were mindful not to sign off the waiver until all due diligence has been completed with full auditable evidence.

C/24/123 The Vice Principal Finance and Resources advised that the College would have to return the funds should the College not have spent them by the Department for Education (DfE)'s deadline. The waiver application had only just been completed, as the Programme Area Manager had to spend a lot of time trying to source the specialist equipment needed, and the waiver relates only to one piece of the equipment required.

C/24/124 This research had to be undertaken alongside his T Level teaching and managerial duties. The College does not have a procurement team and it is down to individual managers who do not always have the time or resource to complete timely, so things do get delayed. The Vice Principal Finance and Resources has seen the quotations and orders. Five suppliers were contacted but none were able to meet the requirements, as the equipment is a bespoke cut with housing to be purchased as a single package. The full information has not been translated into the form. It was suggested that, for future, the waiver form should be amended to cover all concerns raised ensuring that it is appropriate and fit for purpose. The Board would wish to use the funding and so, on this occasion, may delegate authority to the Chair of the Corporation and Ms Estkowska to approve the waiver, once they are satisfied with the audit evidence provided.

**C/24/125 The Corporation received and discussed the Corporate Services Report, paper LMC/C/23/24 and approved delegated authority to the Chair of the Corporation and Agata Estkowska to approve the waiver request in relation to specialist engineering equipment at a cost of £121,189, subject to satisfactory assurance and audit evidence being provided.**

*ACTION: Vice Principal Finance and Resources to amend the waiver form to include: conflicts of interest declaration, gifts / hospitality declaration and additional evidence box to support waiver application, as well as the introduction of a 'Single Supplier Justification' form regardless of whether this would be above a tender threshold.*

#### **REVIEW OF COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS 2023/24**

C/24/126 The Vice Principal Finance and Resources referred members to paper LMC/C/24/24 and advised that complaints are directed to a central administration point, where they are given a ranking before being assigned to one of the Vice Principals to oversee an investigation. Following the outcome of the investigation, a complaint may be justified, upheld etc. and action would need to be identified to prevent re-occurrence. Overall, the number of complaints within the control of the College did increase slightly to 50 in 2023/24, up from 36 in 2022/23. Of those, 17 were upheld and 16 were partially upheld. Although there has been an increase in the number of complaints, in the context of around 3,000 learners in total, it is a fairly small amount. With an increase in learners, there is an expectation that complaints would increase by some proportion. Compliments are also logged when they come in centrally.

In response to Governors' scrutiny and challenge, the following points were highlighted:

C/24/127 It was acknowledged that there was no defined definition for the high, medium or low categorisation, but was based on a judgement call from an experienced administrator who co-ordinates the central records. Governors advised that it would be useful to have clear rationale for the categorisations, which would enable any member of staff to cover complaints.

C/24/128 All complaints are directed in to a central point and are then allocated to the relevant Vice Principal for oversight and monitoring. The Principal remains outside of the initial process, as this is the line of appeal. There are not many appeals from complaint outcomes, and none recorded in 2023/24. The retirement of the Director of HR Strategy and Support, who provided the annual analysis, would provide an opportunity to review the whole complaints process.



- C/24/129 Although the Vice Principals have oversight of each complaint, most of them are handed down to middle management to investigate before the outcomes are provided to the Vice Principals for a decision and outcome letter. In general, most of the complaints relate to teaching, learning and assessment, so will be triaged by the Vice Principal Progress and Performance and then passed to the relevant Programme Area Manager. The Vice Principal Progress and Performance will oversee the process, rather than undertake the investigations.
- C/24/130 There were eight complaints related to exam concessions or additional needs and, if the relevant support was not provided, it could directly impact on a learner's chance to get the best result. There were a variety of reasons for the complaints, and, sometimes, learners may have an expectation of entitlement that is not justified under awarding body's exam guidance. On occasion, the information is not received timely so cannot be put in place prior to the exam, as there is a deadline for submission of exam access arrangements to the awarding bodies. Both the learning support and exam teams make every effort to ensure all necessary arrangements are in place for learners sitting exams.
- C/24/131 It was evident from the report that there is a shortage of staffing, as five out of eight complaints relating to exam concessions were upheld. For the GCSE Autumn resits, there were over 100 exam access arrangements information provided by schools, but it all requires verification. The Additional Learning Support manager must see certificated evidence from the staff member at a school to ensure that they are qualified to undertake the assessments. Once an exam access arrangement has been signed off, this will remain in place for the learner for the remainder of their time at the College. There has been a long term staff member on sick leave, who is not expected to return and, although someone has been seconded to that role, this will leave a staffing gap. It is a specialist role and, therefore, hard to fill. The Additional Learning Support manager is accredited to undertake the assessments, but a second staff member is also off long term sick. The report relates to 2023/24 and, moving forward, the better information from schools will help to address the situation.
- C/24/132 The Academic Staff Governor advised that, when the verifier from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) comes to inspect GCSE invigilation in the Summer, it is always noted that the College has more learners with exam concessions than other schools and colleges. There is a balance between what learners want and what they actually need. The College cannot put exam access arrangement in place, once the deadline with the exam awarding body has passed. The process for exam access arrangements starts at enrolment, with some schools better at providing information than others. Even if a student requested all their information from school, this would still have to be verified by the College and school staff certification would not be provided to individual learners. Only accredited staff can undertake assessments.
- C/24/133 It would be useful for future reports if the number of compliments could also be included. Although complaints are all dealt with centrally, compliments often come through various channels and are not always recorded centrally. It was suggested that a culture of celebration should be encouraged by, for example, awards for compliments, inclusion on College IP, compliment slips similar to those found in hotels which learners could also complete about members of staff. All of these would encourage a culture of compliments and would be 'in the moment' responsive. It is human nature to complain and not necessarily to compliment, but part of the issue is that many staff who receive compliments see their actions as the norm and not anything special.



**C/24/134 The Corporation received and discussed the Review of Comments, Compliments and Complaints 2023/24, paper LMC/C/24/24.**

*ACTION: Senior team to incorporate clear and defined definitions of high, medium and low categorisations within the Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy.*

*ACTION: Senior team to ensure the number of compliments received is included in future reports to add context.*

**STATUTORY**

**ANNUAL STAFFING REPORT, INCLUDING STAFF SURVEY OUTCOMES**

C/24/135 The Vice Principal Finance and Resources referred members to paper LMC/C/25/24 and advised that the report had been compiled by the Director of HR Strategy and Support. There was a detailed amount of information included about the staff profile. Job applications were slow in the first part of the year, but there was a slight improvement in the second half of the year. Some posts, however, remain vacant and the College is struggling to recruit. In regard to the staff profile, there has been a slight reduction in the age profile, but staff turnover was high at 21.4%, a fifth of the workforce, and this did put pressure on a number of departments to cover vacancies etc. There was also an increase in sickness, with number of days standing at 4.3%. The target in the Strategic Plan is below 4%. There has been a number of quite significant long term sickness absences and, if these were removed, the rate fell to just 1.5%, which is relatively low. The results of the staff survey were mixed, but the senior team condensed the issues into three main areas; communication, workload and resources. The Principal has implemented focus groups to dig deeper into some of the issues to ascertain the real causes, enabling measures to address to be implemented.

In response to Governors' scrutiny and challenge, the following points were highlighted:

C/24/136 Staff turnover is across the College, with a lot of turnover in certain teaching areas, but also some support areas such as cleaning and catering. There is an inevitability that change brings change. A change in direction, standards and expectations may have led to some staff choosing to retire or leave, but there were also some longstanding vacancies in both business support and teaching sectors that provided difficult to recruit. It would have been interesting to see a further breakdown of leavers, to ascertain whether this was mainly new staff unable to meet expectations or whether workload pressure and pay mean long time teachers moved on to different opportunities. There was one area of the College that needed to have significant change due to root cause issues, and this did lead to a number of staff leaving the College, some new and some experienced. This was not emblematic across the College, but was an example of where they may be a 'ripple effect'.

C/24/137 All staff leaving are offered an exit interview with the Principal, of which circa 90% are accepted and have positive discussion. Some staff do complain, but others have raised root cause problems that have needed to be dealt with properly. Some staff are dissatisfied teaching in Further Education and go on to other opportunities, rather than other colleges, but some staff also return. In leadership, there are only bad managers, not bad organisations.

- C/24/138 There is increased rigour in the recruitment process, with standards of expectation, quality of services, standards in teaching, learning and assessment and not all staff meet those values, behaviours, quality of work etc. and are, therefore, challenged well but in a constructive way. Working from home has also opened the doors for people to work anywhere, not just to where they can travel. Staff retention is a big issue for many employers, but the College does not have the freedom to offer additional benefits to staff.
- C/24/139 It was noted that three teachers do not hold the minimum Level 2 qualifications required by the College but only one was currently on course. This may be due to staff being from a trade background, where they were a good trade professional but without the literacy or numeracy qualifications. These staff would be required to complete their teaching qualification or assessor award first, before undertaking the Level 2 qualifications. Staff were required to obtain all qualifications within two years of commencing their employment.
- C/24/140 The Principal had been aware that changes would affect the responses, but the results were even lower than expected, which was both a concern and a disappointment. The wider senior team was keen to explore underneath the data, and there were many annotated comments within the survey that contrast with the headline statistics, so this needed unpicking. There were a few themes under which the main issues could be categorised, and then a workshop approach has been taken, focusing on group work with a small but diverse number of staff from both curriculum and support areas. Two of those focus groups took place this week, and provided a degree of comfort to the Principal, as feedback aligned to the comments rather than scores. As an example, feedback on communication was constructive and did not necessarily relate to 'top down' communication but rather 'horizontal' between departments and how staff worked together. Staff have also welcomed the introduction of the short 'Monday Morning Briefings', along with the newsletter and Principal's forums. Some of the issues also relate to the number of new staff in College and that established staff do not yet know and recognise them. It is unusual for there to be so many new staff, and there are suggestions on how to overcome some of the issues, e.g. a 'speed dating' session on professional development day. The structure of the campus does not always encourage cross-campus working either, but almost encourages staff to work departmentally. Cross-college communications need to improve, which should be values based and have empathy around each other's roles, and the different pressures and stresses in those roles.
- C/24/141 'Job exchange' days have been offered in the past and this could be suggested again, as well as better celebrating success and awards. IT resources are more positive, with the new Wi-Fi reliability, but there could be more around how this informs teaching, learning and assessment, as well as dedicated IT spaces or more mobile technology. When discussing student behaviours, it is important to recognise the audience as there are multiple generations in the workplace. 16-18 learners are closer to age 12 -14 in terms of levels of maturity and how they cope with life and not enough has been done with the workforce to prepare for this. Part of this could be attributed to the pandemic, but also to technology. Staff need to get to know others in different departments, but also there is the 'You Said, We Did' feedback, communities of practice etc. and there will be more things being put in place.
- C/24/142 The Corporation received and discussed the Annual Staffing Report, including Staff Survey Outcomes, paper LMC/C/25/24.**

## **ANNUAL STREAMLINED ENERGY AND CARBON REPORTING**

C/24/143 The Vice Principal Finance and Resources referred members to paper LMC/C/26/24 and advised that there is a statutory requirement for this to be published on the College website and the data relates to the previous academic year. The carbon emissions include gas and electric usage, as well as College transport and staff using their own vehicles for College business. Although still lower than in 2021, carbon emissions increased significantly in year from 652 tonnes to 713 tonnes, which was disappointing. Some of this may be attributed to the ratio used within the sector, which is the norm, but does not take account of growth in student numbers and only focuses on staff. An alternative method would be to consider the emission per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) student. On that basis, carbon reduction has slightly decreased. Weather has the biggest impact, as the College has gas heating, but there are measures that can be tried to improve carbon emissions, but a lot of work is needed.

In response to Governors' scrutiny and challenge, the following points were highlighted:

C/24/144 The pandemic was still impacting in 2021, when the College remained open but with social distancing in place, which meant windows were fully opened but with the heating on. There is a Sustainability Strategy in place, and leaders have a responsibility to think about carbon reduction in a strategic way, which aligns with campus facilities and dovetails into the condition survey in order to be impactful. Meaningful actions will, however, come with significant cost, but there needs to be a reduction and this should remain a priority.

C/24/145 The installation of the new kitchen, which is all induction, should have a positive impact going forward, but other measures should be considered as soon as possible but within budgetary constraints. All of the recent improvements have been externally and, without that funding, would not have been possible. There would need to be significant investment in order to make a meaningful difference to lowering overall emissions.

**C/24/146 The Corporation discussed and approved the Annual Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting, paper LMC/C/26/24.**

### **CONSENT**

#### **ITEMS FOR APPROVAL**

C/24/147 The Chair of the Corporation informed members that the definitions for high, medium and low categorisations of complaints had been agreed in earlier discussions. The Gender Pay Gap report was not a policy, but the College would need to publish a redacted version by law.

**C/24/148 The Corporation approved:**

- **People and Wellbeing Strategy, paper LMC/C/27/24;**
- **Complaints and Compliments Feedback Policy 2024/25, paper LMC/C/28/24; and**
- **Gender Pay Gap Report, paper LMC/C/29/24.**

## **INFORMATION**

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

C/24/149 There were no other items of business raised.

### **Governor Feedback on Events Attended**

C/24/150 Lee Lawson provided feedback to Governors on his observation of a Level 1 fabrication and welding class. Delivery was first class, with high expectations for learners. Mr Lawson witnessed learners developing good engineering skills and knowledge, and life skills, such as employability, health and safety etc., were also being developed. Resources were well stocked. Mr Lawson also met with the Head of Performance and Improvement and the Apprenticeships Manager to look at timeliness, apprenticeship achievement and learners 'at risk'. Staff are pro-active in tracking learner progress and putting place interventions. Retention currently stands at just under 79%, so a realistic benchmark of 60% achievement has been forecast for this year. Leavers' data for 2023/24 was also reviewed, with some employment discontinued as employers wanted the incentive payment but not to fulfil the commitment to train the apprentice. Others did not complete their End Point Assessment (EPA), as they had already achieved the qualification required, e.g. Gas Safe certificate. Attendance data and process for absence, the current self-assessment report for apprenticeships and the potential impact of the increase to the apprenticeship wage from April 2025 were all discussed. It was felt that some employers may terminate their apprenticeships due to the rising costs and this is an area of concern. Mr Lawson will also attend an 'at risk' improvement meeting in the future.

C/24/151 In addition, Jane Taylor met with the Head of Engagement for a 'Careers Link' visit and reported that the whole engagement team should be congratulated on a sterling effort. The Chair of the Corporation attended part of the validation meeting for the whole College Self-Assessment Report (SAR), which will be discussed at the next meeting.

### **DATES AND TIMES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

C/24/152 Tuesday 03 December 2024 at 5.30pm  
Tuesday 14 January 2025 at 5.30pm (*Training Session*)

### **DRAFT MINUTES AND PAPERS OF THE REMUNERATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 05 NOVEMBER 2024**

C/24/153 This is a confidential item for Corporation Members only, under section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act. Paragraphs C/24/154 to C/24/163 are, therefore, minuted separately.

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The Corporation agrees that these non-confidential minutes are an accurate record of the meeting.

**APPROVED BY FULL BOARD ON: 03 December 2024**