OLDHAM COLLEGE
FULL CORPORATION

Minutes of the Hybrid Meeting held on Tuesday 17 December 2024 at 4.00pm

Present:	Jonathan Edwards	Governor – Chair
	Adrian Barrass	Governor
	Alex Gardiner	Governor
	Mashukul Hoque	Governor
	Simon Jordan	Principal & CEO
	David Kay	Governor (On line)
	Sue Kershaw	Governor
	Phil Mayall	Governor (On line)
	Shaid Mushtaq	Governor
	Michelle Royle	Staff Governor
	Jane Shelton	Governor
	Danielle Vipond	Governor
	Carol Whitworth	Governor
	Karen Wright	Governor
	Joshua Bellot	Student Governor
	Catrina Cenusa	Student Governor
	Sarah Thompson	Governor
Officers:	Rebecca Johnson	Finance Director
	Rachel James	Deputy Principal
	Alan Benvie	Vice Principal, Student Experience & Inclusion
	Janet Frost	Clerk to the Corporation
In attendance:	Karen Musgrave	RSM (Part) (Online)
Apologies:	Paul Axon	Governor

19/24 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

Declarations of interest were made by Shaid Mushtaq should any discussion in the meeting relate to his area of work. Officers of the organisation declared an interest in Item 10, Staff Annual Pay Review report 2024.

20/24 Introductions, Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been reported and accepted from Paul Axon.

20/24.1 Resignation of Tariq Rafique (Item 5.1)

The Chair informed members that Tariq Rafique had resigned as governor with immediate effect. The Chair thanked TR for his contribution since joining the College in December 2021.

21/24 Minutes of the Meeting held 22 October 2024

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held on 22 October 2024 had been previously circulated to members for consideration.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes reflected a true record of the meeting and were accepted as a correct record.

22/24 **Rolling Actions**

1. **22 October 2024 Min 4/24.1 Principal's Report**
   The Strategic Risk meeting in September will review all options for the short- and long-term plan of UCO and the HE / university provision.
   It was **RESOLVED** this action was complete.
2. **22 October 2024 Min 9/24 - Resources Summary Report**
   Further meeting of the Corporation to be scheduled to consider UCO/ higher education plan (accommodation and curriculum) & SWOT analysis.
   It was **RESOLVED** this action was complete.

23/24 **Election of Vice Chair of the Corporation**

The Clerk reported that following the resignation of the previous Vice Chair at the October 2024 meeting, the Clerk had sought interest amongst the governing body to be appointed to the position. One governor, Sue Kershaw, had expressed an interest prior to the meeting and no further nominations were received at the current meeting.
The Chair nominated Sue Kershaw as Vice Chair and this was seconded by Shaid Mushtaq.

It was RESOLVED that Sue Kershaw be appointed as Vice Chair for a four-year term commencing 17 December 2024 to 16 December 2028 (subject to continuing term of office as governor).

24/24 The Chair proposed a change to the sequence of reporting with the following items brought forward on the agenda: Item 7 Audit Findings Document and Audit Management Letter; Item 7.1 Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2023-24; Item 7.2 Financial Statements for Year Ending 31st July 2024.
It was RESOLVED that members accepted the change to the sequence of reporting.

25/24 **Audit Findings Document and Audit Management Letter (Item 7)**

A copy of the Audit Findings Report (including Letter of Representation) for year ended 31st July 2024 had previously been circulated to members prior to the meeting for their consideration.
On behalf of the Audit Committee, David Kay (Chair) confirmed the committee had considered the final accounts and the ACR at its December meeting and presented these to the Corporation for approval.
At the invitation of the Chair, Karen Musgrave was invited to present the report to members. KM drew out key points from the report noting it was a clean audit opinion being issued with no regularity issues to bring to the Board's attention and no modifications to report.
KM summarised the key audit findings noting these were not material to the figures.
She further added the College was a 'going concern' and this had been stress tested during the audit.
KM added her thanks to the Finance Team for their support throughout the process.

It was RESOLVED that members:

(i) **Approved the External Auditors' Management Letter including Letter of Representation, and**

(ii) **Approved the Chair of the Corporation and Principal & CEO to sign the statements on behalf of the Corporation.**

16.17 –Karen Musgrave of RSM retired from the meeting

26/24 **Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2023/24 (Item 7.1)**

The Clerk introduced the Audit Committee Annual report, which had been agreed by the Audit Committee on 12th December 2024. The Corporation was required to take into consideration the annual report of the Audit Committee before approving the Financial Statements, which include a Corporate Governance statement confirming that the Corporation is satisfied with the operation and effectiveness of the systems of internal control.

It was Resolved that the contents of the report and the Audit Committee Opinion for 2023/4, should be noted.

27/24 **Financial Statements for the year ending 31 July 2024 (Item 7.2)**

The Finance Director reported the financial statements for 2023/24 had been prepared and reported to the Resources Committee at the December meeting and the committee recommend the accounts to the Corporation for approval. The FD referred to the reconciliation figures of the financial accounts against the management accounts which members noted and approved. Further consideration was given to the bad debt provision recorded in the accounts of £20,569 (2023 £61,685) and members approved the amount as reported noting the Finance Team would continue its efforts to recovering debts where it was able to do so.

It was RESOLVED that members :-

- **(i) Approved the Financial Statements for 2023/24,**
- (ii) **Approved the Chair of the Corporation and Principal & CEO to sign the approved statements on behalf of the Corporation**

28/24 **Student Voice Update (Item 6)**

A copy of the Student Voice report had previously been sent to members for their consideration prior to the meeting. The report detailed activities the SU had participated in since the last meeting including; attendance at the Remembrance Parade in College, participating in student question time at the GM Parliament Week events, insight into the Northern Roots project, African Adventures hosted an evening with parents and students to share information on the planned Turing Funded trip to Kenya in the summer of 2025, noted the students forums were well attended throughout November and the College Development Day in December with staff, governors and students had been a positive networking experience for all that took part.

A member sought assurance regarding the expenditure of funds in the Student Union account, **C**
specifically whether they were being used to enhance the student experience at the college. The Financial Director (FD) confirmed that the funds were directly allocated to student activities. While students continue to organize events to generate income, it was noted that many of these events are charity-focused, with the proceeds directed to the identified causes. Additionally, it was highlighted that the future of the Student Union, in its current constitutional format, is under review as part of ongoing efforts to improve the student voice framework

The Student Governor reported that recent forums were well attended, with excellent contributions, discussions, and feedback from students. In response to a query, the Student Governor emphasised **Q**
key issues raised, such as expanding catering areas, addressing pricing concerns, and enhancing Wi-Fi services. Meanwhile, the Finance Director referred to the Wi-Fi proposal discussed at the December Resources Committee meeting, highlighting the benefits it would provide to students.

It was noted that review of the role of the Student Union was ongoing and report would be presented later this academic year once the student voice framework is embedded and evaluation of its effectiveness is concluded.

It was RESOLVED that members noted the report as presented.

29/24 **Curriculum and Quality Summary Report (Item 8)**

The Deputy Principal (DP) introduced the C&Q Summary Report that had previously been circulated to members for information. The DP reported that the C&Q Committee had considered each of the reports in detail at the 3 December 2024 meeting.

- **SAR 2024** – A copy of the College Self-Assessment Report for 2024 had previously been circulated to members for consideration prior to the meeting. The DP introduced the report and thanked the C&Q Committee members for their participation in the recent validation process.
  The DP continued and presented the report to the Corporation in detail, advising that the College was self-assessing overall effectiveness as 'good'. During discussion the DP advised members that SLT considered the report to be an accurate reflection of the College's performance and that it reflected the commitment to continuous improvement.
  In concluding the discussion members confirmed the report represented an accurate account of the validation process and expressed their appreciation of the report's transparency.
- **Safeguarding and Welfare Report** – A detailed report on matters relating to safeguarding and welfare of students had been circulated to members prior to the meeting noting the C&Q Committee had considered the report at its recent meeting. It was reported the Lead Governor for Safeguarding had met regularly this current term with the DSL to review policy and procedures. Members noted the report.
- **FE and Apprenticeships Quality Report**
- Key areas of focus for term one was reported and progress to date noted. Areas included; Accelerated support in Construction, H&SC, Teaching and Learning, Teaching for Excellence
- **KPIs Headlines** were noted including; the proportion of provision focussed on skills priority sectors has increased by 5% to 71%, the number of employers engaged in at least one college programme has increased to 718, 111 of these are new to the college in this academic year.
- **Right Learner Right Start** – Reported attendance remains focus area (81% compared to 83% 23/24), milestones in place 95% compared to 93 2023/24
- **SPOC Report Headlines -** The response rate for the full-time At-entry SPOC survey was 73%, an 11% decline from 2023/24. The main areas of decline were Caring Professions (58. %) and ESOL (45%). In answer to a question raised the DP explained how increased participation to completing the SPOC had been agreed and would be implemented for the next survey. **Q**
- **English and Maths resit update** – Noted an increase in attendance to the GCSE November series was seen in both English and Maths.

- **HE and Higher Skills Quality Report**
- The DP provided a summary update on the **Quality Monitoring KPI** report for UCO which reported the position on UCO enrolment, 527 against a target of 505.
- **Achievement rates** – reported achievement rate was 74% (78% 2022/23), pass rate 92% (91% 2022/23) and retention 81% (85% 2022/23)
- **UCO External Examiner Summary Report 2023-24** – Summary of the External Examiner reports were provided and it was reported overall exceedingly positive comments throughout the reports had been received, with the EE's confirming the achievements were comparable with other UK HE institutions.
- **UCO Induction Survey Report 2024/25** – It was reported all HE students enrolled on to a new course in 2024-25 had been asked to participate in the survey and provide feedback on their induction experience. The total participation rate for the survey was 68% (215 of 318). Of note, 96% of students were overall satisfied with their Induction at UCO in 2024/25 and 71% of eligible questions asked in the survey scored above benchmark

- Members noted the policies the C&Q Committee had reviewed and approved.

It was RESOLVED that:-

(i) members approved the SAR 2023/24,

(ii) members noted the report as presented.

30/24 **<u>Principal's Report</u> (Item 9)**

A copy of the Principal's Report had previously been circulated to members for consideration prior to the meeting. The Principal guided members through the report and provided an overview of the key strategic and operational issues.

In discussion the following points were considered:-

- Update on recent **governmental policy** priorities and implications for the sector. Discussion ensued and members noted potential impact on the sector
- **Worldskills** – Reported the College had hosted nine WorldSkills UK competitions during finals week (18-22 November), with a diverse range of visitors, including governors, Department for Education officials and Skills Minister Jacqui Smith, the Association of Colleges (AOC), representatives from other colleges, local authorities, employers, and partners. The college had the highest number of students progressing to the finals and two students were awarded a silver and bronze medal.
- The latest **staff KPI data** was reported and noted by members
- Reported the impact of the **Autumn Budget** on the college and sector
- An update was reported on the **UCO** building position and members supported the action and awaited the outcome of the condition and feasibility report which would then enable further exploratory of the future plans for UCO and HE and adult provision
- **Grange Theatre** – noted subject to the pending approvals demolition of the building would commence early 2025
- **Futsal** – lease agreed with OMBC, awaiting final council approval
- The Principal reported he continues to strengthen relationships with **external partners** and details of recent meetings were noted by members

It was RESOLVED that members noted the report as presented.

31/24 **<u>Staff Annual Pay Report 2024</u> (Item 10)**

The Principal advised that a detailed report on the College's pay proposal had been reported to the Resources Committee at its 9th December 2024 meeting, and following robust scrutiny of the impact on budget the Committee had recommended the pay award as detailed in the report to the Corporation for approval.

The Principal referred to the report which had been circulated prior to the meeting for consideration and assured the board the proposal was affordable and the 2024/25 budget had been built to include the proposal as reported. A member asked for clarity on the proposed changes to tutor scales, impact on budget this year and future, and impact on staff morale. In answer the Principal provided further explanation and rationality for the changes to tutor scales advising the increase in salary scales had been built into financial planning and staff succession planning. **<u>C</u>**

In considering the recommendation a robust discussion ensued and it was recognised that to ensure the college remained competitive a review of competitor salaries be carried out alongside a review of roles and responsibilities and performance management and the outcome be reported to the Resources Committee for scrutiny.

It was RESOLVED that members approved:-

(i) 4% pay rise for 2024/25,

(ii) increase of the real living wage hourly rate from £12.00 to £12.60,

(iii) the changes as reported to the FE teaching and training pay scales,

(iv) a review of competitor salaries be carried out alongside a review of roles and responsibilities and performance management and the outcome be reported to the Resources Committee for scrutiny.

32/24 **Finance and Resources Committee Summary Report (Item 11)**

A copy of the Finance and Resources Summary Report had previously been circulated to members for consideration. The Finance Director advised that the Resources Committee had received detailed papers and discussed all at length at their meeting on the 9 December 2024.

The reports presented included:-.

i. **Cash flow and Treasury Report position –** Members noted the current cash flow position and the action being taken to manage loan position.

ii. **Management accounts to 31st October 2024** – The Finance Director referred to the October 2024 management accounts advising the EBITDA reflected a positive position (earnings before interest, tax and depreciation) with the year-end estimated EBITDA in line with expectations at £4,015k (budget £4,023k). The FD assured members all income streams continued to be closely monitored to ensure income targets were achieved.

iii. **T Level Modular Building** – Noted the progress being achieved with the installation of the build and the amendment to cashflow and timeline.

iv. **Wifi Proposal** – The FD summarised the Wifi proposal including tender recommendation and the improvements it will deliver to teaching and learning. Following robust discussion to the impact of the increased wifi coverage members approved Switchshop Ltd to deliver the contract at a total cost of £225,858.

v. **IT Strategy** – Received and noted the IT Strategy as presented. Agreed that the IT and ILT Strategies would be brought together to be a combined and comprehensive approach to technology across the campus, incorporating teaching and learning and facilities.

vi. **Business Continuity Plan** - A copy of the Business Continuity Plan had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. It was reported the document had been received at the Resources Committee and recommended to the Corporation with no further changes. Members considered and approved the document as presented

vii. **Fees Policy 2025/26** – The Resources Committee recommended to the Corporation approval of the Fees Policy for 2025/26 and a copy was provided to members prior to the meeting for their consideration. Members approved the policy as presented.

viii. **HE Fees 2026/27** - The Resources Committee recommended to the Corporation approval of the HE Fees for 2026/27 and a report detailing the proposed fees was provided to members prior to the meeting for their consideration. Members approved the fees as reported.

ix. **Financial Regulation**s – A copy of the Financial Regulations had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. It was reported the document had been received at the Resources Committee and recommended to the Corporation with no further changes. Members considered and approved the document as presented.

x. **Risk Management Register** - A copy of the Risk Management Register had been updated and reviewed at the Resources Committee. Members noted the report.

xi. **Contracts over £30k** – Members noted the report presented.

xii. **Reserves Policy** - A copy of the Reserves Policy had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. It was reported the document had been received at the Resources

Committee and recommended to the Corporation with no further changes. Members considered and approved the document as presented

xiii. **Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment Policy** – Approved by the Resources Committee

xiv. **Anti-Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace Policy** – Approved by the Resources Committee

It was RESOLVED that members noted the reports as presented and approved :-
(i) Switchshop Ltd to deliver the wifi proposal at a total cost of £225,858 + vat
(ii) Fees Policy 2025/26,
(iii) UCO Fees Policy 2026/27,
(iv) Financial Regulations
(v) IT Strategy 2024-27
(vi) Business Continuity Plan
(vii) Reserves Policy

33/24 **Audit Committee Summary Report (Item 12)**

A copy of the Audit Summary Report had been prepared by the Finance Director and previously circulated to members for consideration, information and approval. The Finance Director reported that each of the reports identified had been scrutinised at the Audit Committee held at the 12th December 2024 meeting (Audit Findings Document and Audit Management Letter reported at minute 25/24 and Audit Committee Annual Report to Corporation 2023/24 at minute 26/24). Reports presented included:-

- The **Regularity Self Assessment Questionnaire for 2023 to 2024** was presented to members for information
- The FD presented the **Risk Management Policy** and **Risk Management Register to** the committee for review. It was reported the Policy was recommended to the Corporation for approval with no further changes.
  The FD drew members attention to the Risk Register and assured members actions were taking place to mitigate the risks referenced.
- **Whistleblowing Policy** – the updated Whistleblowing Policy was received by the committee and recommended to the Corporation for approval with no further changes
- The **Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement** was received by the committee and recommended to the Corporation for approval with no further changes.

It was RESOLVED that:-
(i) members noted the report as presented
(ii) members approved the Risk Management Policy as presented
(iii) members approved the Whistleblowing Policy
(iv) Members approved the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement.

34/24 **Use of College Seal (Item 13)**

Not used since the previous meeting.

35/24 **Minutes and Reports from meetings:-**

35/24.1 Curriculum and Quality Committee 15 October 2024 (Item 14.1)

It was reported that the minutes of the C&Q Committee held on 15 October 2024 had been circulated to members for formal receipt and there was no further discussion required on any of the items.
It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting be received as a true record of the meeting

35/24.2 Curriculum and Quality Committee 3 December 2024 (Item 14.2)

It was reported that the minutes of the C&Q Committee held on 3 December 2024 had been circulated to members for formal receipt and there was no further discussion required on any of the items.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting be received as a true record of the meeting

35/24.3 Resources Committee 21 October 2024 (Item 14.3)

It was reported that the minutes of the Resources Committee held on 21 October 2024 had been circulated to members for formal receipt and there was no further discussion required on any of the items.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting be received as a true record of the meeting

35/24.4 Resources Committee 9 December 2024 (Item 14.4)

It was reported that the minutes of the Resources Committee held on 9 December 2024 had been circulated to members for formal receipt and there was no further discussion required on any of the items.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting be received as a true record of the meeting

35/24.5 Audit Committee 12 December 2024 (Item 14.5)

Deferred to the next meeting

36/24 Corporation Workplan (Item 15)

The Workplan for 2024/25 including changes to the reporting sequence for the current meeting was presented to members for consideration.

Members noted the report.

It was RESOLVED that noted the Workplan as presented.

37/24 Any Other Business (Item 16)

None reported

38/24 Dates of Future Meeting

25 March 2025

1 July 2025

6.20pm – Meeting closed

Minutes Approved………………………………………………………………………….Date………………………………………….

Chair

Full Corporation 17 December 2024
Rolling Action List

Meeting Date and Item No.	**Rolling Action List** (Outstanding actions from previous meeting(s) to be carried forward, listed below, and not removed until completed/closed.)	Actionee	Reported as Completed at meeting of:
02 07 24 Min 62/23 22 10 24 Min 4/24.1	**Principal's Report** The Strategic Risk meeting in September will review all options for the short- and long-term plan of UCO and the HE / university provision.	Principal	17 12 24 22/24.1
22 10 24 Min 9/24	**Resources Summary Report** Further meeting of the Corporation to be scheduled to consider UCO/ higher education plan (accommodation and curriculum) & SWOT analysis.	SJ	17 12 24 22/24.2
17 12 24 Min 31/24	**Staff Annual Pay Award 2024** A review of competitor salaries be carried out alongside a review of roles and responsibilities and performance management and the outcome be reported to the Resources Committee for scrutiny.	SJ/CS	