

Runshaw College Corporation Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday 21 March 2024, 5.30 – 7.30 pm

Corporation Board Members		Attendance							
		28.09.23		07.12.23		21.03.24		16.05.24	
Full Name	Position	Attended	Apologies	Attended	Apologies	Attended	Apologies	Attended	Apologies
Warren Middleton	Chair	✓		✓					
Alison Watson-Bird	Chair [from Jan 24]	✓		✓		✓			
Motunrayo Ainenehi	Student Governor			✓		✓			
Portia Bailey-Barrow	Independent Governor		A		A [Maternity leave]		A [Maternity leave]		
Robert Cobourne	Staff Governor	✓			A		A		
Simon Drew	Independent Governor		A	✓		✓			
Richard Evans	Independent Governor	✓		✓		✓			
Gary Hall	Independent Governor	✓			A	✓			
Ali Kamel	Student Governor		A	✓			A		
Joshi Jariwala	Independent Governor		X	✓		✓			
Martina Jay	Independent Governor		A	✓			Unable to attend due to technical issues		
Michael Lowe	Independent Governor	✓			A	✓			
Alex Magowan	Staff Governor	✓		✓		✓			
Dominic Martinez	Independent Governor	✓		✓		✓			
Graham Murphy	Independent Governor	✓			A	✓			
Ade Oladapo	Independent Governor	✓		✓			A		
Clare Russell	Principal	✓		✓		✓			
Total attendance		69%		75%		79%			
Clerk									
Denise Williamson	Head of Governance	✓		✓		✓			
In Attendance									
Martin Rigby	Deputy Principal	✓		✓		✓			
Janet Ivill	Vice Principal	✓		✓		✓			
Helen Knowles	Beever & Struthers [Item 3 only]			✓					

✓	Present
A	Apologies
X	Absent

Item	Agenda item
1.	Apologies for Absence
<p>Apologies for absence were received from Robert Cobourne, Ali Kamel and Ade Oladapo. Portia Bailey-Barrow was not expected to attend due to maternity leave. Martina Jay attempted to join the meeting remotely but was unable to connect due to internal technical issues.</p> <p>The meeting was observed by Ron Matthews, External Board Reviewer.</p>	
2.	Declarations of interest
<p>Governors were invited to declare any direct, indirect, pecuniary, personal or prejudicial interest relating to any item on the agenda for the meeting. Richard Evans, Martyn Lylyk and Alison Watson-Bird declared an interest in item 4 on the agenda.</p>	
3.	Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 December 2023
3.1	Corporation Board Minutes – 7 December 2023
<p>The minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held on 7 December 2023 were reviewed and approved as an accurate record.</p>	
3.2	Action Log
<p>All actions remaining on the Action Progress Log had been completed with the exception of Action CB A18 regarding an assessment of the extent to which the College is currently meeting the expectations of the new AoC Code of Good Governance as part of the External Board Review. The Head of Governance confirmed that the External Board Review was in progress and that this assessment was included within the scope.</p>	
4.	Governance Matters
<p>The Head of Governance presented a report requesting the approval of the Board in relation to various changes to roles and responsibilities within the Corporation Board following discussion and oversight by the various sub-committees.</p> <p>Having reviewed the report and considered the recommendations the following was agreed:</p> <p>Richard Evans left the meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment of the Vice Chair of the Corporation Board – The Head of Governance confirmed that two nominations for the role of Vice Chair had been received. Of the two candidates, one confirmed that they were willing to be considered for the role whilst the other nominee did not wish to be considered. The Head of Governance further confirmed that the governor who had been nominated and was willing to be considered was Richard Evans, currently Chair of the Standards & Curriculum Committee. <p>Decision: CD D24: The Board approved the appointment of Richard Evans as Vice Chair of the Corporation Board.</p>	

Richard Evans returned to the meeting

Martyn Lylyk left the meeting

- **Appointment of Chair of Search & Governance Committee** – The Head of Governance explained that Alison Watson-Bird would be standing down as Chair of the Search & Governance Committee following her appointment as Chair of the Corporation Board. Following a request for expressions of interest from existing Search & Governance Committee members, the Head of Governance confirmed that Martyn Lylyk had expressed an interest in being considered for the role.

Decision: CB D25: The Board approved the appointment of Martyn Lylyk as Chair of the Search and Governance Committee

Martyn Lylyk returned to the meeting

Alison Watson-Bird left the meeting

- **Appointments to the Finance Committee and Remuneration Committee** – The Head of Governance advised that, following the retirement of the previous Chair of the Corporation Board and the appointment of Alison Watson-Bird as the new Chair of the Board, it was proposed that Alison Watson-Bird join both the Finance Committee and Remuneration Committee.

Decision: CB D26: The Board approved the appointment of Alison Watson-Bird to the Finance Committee and Remuneration Committee

Alison Watson-Bird returned to the meeting

- **Re-appointment of Co-opted member of the People and Organisational Development Committee and Remuneration Committee** – The Head of Governance confirmed that Diane Bourne's term of office as a co-opted member of the People and OD and Remuneration Committees was due to expire in April 2024 and that approval was being sought to re-appoint the co-opted member for an additional four years.

Decision: CB D27: The Board approved the reappointment of Diane Bourne as a co-opted member of the People and OD and Remuneration Committees for a further four years.

Action: CB A23: Re-appointment letter to be sent to Diane Bourne [Owner: Head of Governance]

- **Appointment of Martina Jay to Audit Committee** – The Head of Governance explained that, following the appointment of Alison Watson-Bird as Chair of the Corporation Board, a vacancy had arisen within the Audit Committee which required immediate action to address. The Head of Governance confirmed that the Chair had taken Chair's Action in relation to the decision to appoint Martina Jay to the Audit Committee for the remainder of the academic year and the Board was asked to endorse this decision.

Decision: CB D28: The Board endorsed the decision to appoint Martina Jay to the Audit Committee for the remainder of the academic year.

- **Finance Committee Terms of Reference** – The Head of Governance confirmed that a small amendment had been made to the Terms of Reference for the Finance Committee and that the Board were requested to consider and, if appropriate, approve the revised Terms of Reference.

Decision: CB D29: The Board approved the revised Terms of Reference for the Finance Committee.

- **Search & Governance Committee Terms of Reference:** - The Head of Governance confirmed that some amendments had been made to the Terms of Reference for the Search and Governance Committee to better reflect the purpose of the Committee and that the Board were requested to consider and, if appropriate, approve the revised Terms of Reference.

Decision: CB D30: The Board approved the revised Terms of Reference for the Search & Governance Committee.

- **Skills Task and Finish Group draft Terms of Reference** – The Head of Governance confirmed that terms of reference had been drafted for the new task and finish group focused on the Governors' responsibility to ensure that the College's curriculum meets skills needs. Governors were subsequently asked to review and, if appropriate, approve the draft terms of reference.

Decision: CB D31: The Board approved the terms of reference for the Skills Task and Finish Group

- **Appointment of new governor/s to the Corporation Board** – The Head of Governance confirmed that the Search & Governance Committee had recommended that the Board seek to recruit one or more new governors to join the Corporation Board. The Head of Governance further confirmed that any new appointments would be informed by the outcome of the External Board Review, the work being undertaken with the National Leader of Governance and following analysis of the Governor Skills Audit.

Decision: CB D32: The Board agreed the recommendation to proceed with the recruitment process in relation to one or more new governors

Action: CB A24: Recruitment activity in relation to new governor/s to commence [Owner: Head of Governance]

- **External Board Review** – The Head of Governance provided a brief update in relation to the progress of the External Board Review, confirming that a draft report would be available in mid May 2024.
- **Review of progress against the Governance QIP** – The Head of Governance provided an overview of progress against the Governance QIP which had been reviewed in detail by the Search & Governance Committee.
- **Governor participation in training/external activity** – The Head of Governance reminded Governors to advise her of any training or external activity undertaken in order

that this information can be entered into the training record. The Head of Governance further reminded governors to complete the ETF Safeguarding and/or Prevent modules within the Governor Development Programme.

Action: CB A25: Members to provide information in relation to any training or external activity undertaken for inclusion on the training record and to complete the ETF Safeguarding and Prevent modules within the Governor Development Programme [Owner: Governors/Head of Governance]

5. Reports from Corporation Board Sub Committees

5.1 Audit Committee

The Chair of the Audit Committee provided a summary of the work of the committee highlighting particularly the work that had been carried out in relation to IT Security following a presentation from the Head of IT as part of the recent Audit Committee meeting. The benchmarking exercise which had been undertaken in relation to the risk register was also highlighted, as was the outcome of a recent internal audit report which resulted in no recommendations. The Chair extended his thanks to the Vice Principal and her team on this outstanding outcome.

A member asked about plans for regular testing in relation to IT resilience and the Vice Principal confirmed that this will be part of the cycle of activity which will include annual IT Health checks, as well as Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials Plus reaccreditation.

5.2 Finance Committee

The Chair of the Finance Committee provided a summary of the work of the committee confirming that members had reviewed the management accounts which indicated that the College is expected to meet its year end targets. A discussion followed in relation to the in-year overspend on Estates costs and the Chair confirmed that this would be reviewed as part of the next Finance Committee meeting agenda.

Action: CB A26: Overspend in Estates costs to be reviewed as part of June Finance Committee meeting [Owner: Vice Principal Finance and Facilities]

The Chair also outlined the discussions that had taken place in relation to the 2024/5 budget, confirming that this would be the subject of further discussion as part of the next meeting. It was agreed that the risk register also be reviewed in conjunction with this activity.

Action: CB A27: 2024/25 budget to be reviewed as part of June Finance Committee meeting alongside review of associated risk within risk register [Owner: Vice Principal Finance and Facilities]

Finally, the Chair summarised the outcome of a benchmarking exercise that had been undertaken by the Head of Finance, comparing the financial performance of the College with those in its peer group which, he said, confirmed that the College compares favourably with similar colleges locally.

5.3 People & Organisational Development Committee

The Chair of the People and Organisational Development Committee provided a summary of the work of the committee, highlighting the discussions that had taken place at the most recent meeting regarding the People measures to be included as part of the Governor Dashboard. The Chair confirmed that members of the committee had prioritised those measures that directly impact on student outcomes, whilst also considering those that would be more effectively reported as part of an Annual Report.

The Chair went on to provide details of the discussions taking place regarding hard to fill roles, focusing particularly on the work being undertaken in relation to the recruitment of new staff which included the appointment of a new social media recruitment co-ordinator.

The Chair also described the discussions that had taken place in relation to culture, confirming that the number and timing of staff surveys was currently under review, as well as commenting on the positive impact of the College Strategic Advisory Committee.

Finally, the Chair suggested that a ‘showcase’ focused on People would be useful as part of a future Corporation Board meeting in order to ensure that all board members are aware of the positive work taking place in this area.

Action: CB A28: Showcase focused on People to be included as part of future Corporation Board meeting [Owner: Head of Governance/Principal/Committee Chair]

5.4 Search & Governance Committee

The Chair of the Search and Governance committee provided a summary of the work of the committee, referring particularly to the recommendations made in relation to Agenda Item 4.

The Chair also referred to the amendments made to the terms of reference for the committee, highlighting the work being undertaken in relation to governance KPIs, the identification of governor learning and development needs, ensuring a representative board and succession planning as four key areas of focus moving forwards.

In relation to the Governance QIP, the Chair emphasised the importance of a continuing focus on these areas for development, referring also to the session planned as part of the next Board meeting in relation to preparation for Ofsted inspection.

5.5 Standards & Curriculum Committee

The Chair of the Standards and Curriculum Committee provided a summary of the work of the committee referring particularly to the presentation delivered by the Assistant Principal for A Level provision as part of the last committee meeting. The Chair summarised the discussions that had taken place in relation to the A Level mock examination results, confirming that these demonstrated positive distance travelled year on year.

The Chair referred also to the discussions which had taken place regarding the approval of the Quality related KPIs for inclusion on the governance dashboard, as well as the feedback

received from the student governors which, he confirmed, focused on learner feedback and ensuring that information given to students regarding their next steps was sufficiently detailed and impactful. The Chair also highlighted the work that had been undertaken regarding the development of the Scholars programme and the positive feedback received from student governors regarding this initiative.

6. Principal's report

The Principal provided a summary of her report, highlighting particularly the ongoing focus on initiatives related to driving further improvements in the quality of education and the positive distance travelled achieved following the A Level mock examinations. The Principal confirmed that the recent programme of CPD for teachers had been very well received and that the impact of this was subject to ongoing evaluation with a focus on the experience of learners.

The Principal confirmed that a large number of partnership engagement activities continued to take place and that these were a great strength of the College. The Principal referred particularly to the recent open event which had been the busiest spring open event on record and had contributed to high numbers of 16 – 18 applications which, she confirmed, currently exceed the target set.

On the subject of the Estates masterplan, the Principal confirmed that rapid progress continues to be made with a range of improvements being secured to the campus and plans now in place for the next significant project.

The Principal concluded by confirming that work continues in relation to the College budget for 2024/5, stating that income would be adversely impacted by the overall reduction in 16 – 18 year old enrolments due to retention issues the previous year. The Principal confirmed that retention in the current year is much improved however. The Principal confirmed that various actions are being taken forward in response to the reduction in income including scrutiny of expenditure.

A discussion followed regarding the 2024/5 budget and a member asked about the assumptions made in relation to a staff pay award in the next academic year. The Principal confirmed that, for the moment, a pay award had been assumed in line with the increase in funding of 1.89%, advising that any pay award would be effective from January 2025 following confirmation of 16 – 18 numbers at the census date. Any pay award in excess of this amount would require additional efficiencies to be identified.

A member asked how retention compared with that of other Colleges and the Principal confirmed that there is an issue nationally in relation to retention, particularly post-Covid. The Principal confirmed that this was under considerable scrutiny and that retention is currently tracking above last year.

A member asked what the 16 – 18 enrolment target is for 2024/5 and, following a discussion, it was agreed that this would be confirmed.

Action: CB A29: Target 16 – 18 enrolment numbers to be confirmed [Owner: Principal]

A discussion followed in relation to the national decline in retention and the impact of this in terms of revenue for colleges and a member asked about any lobbying activity that is taking

place in this respect. The Principal responded that this is a significant focus for both the AoC and SFCA.

Finally, the student governor commented favourably on the range of enrichment activities available to students each day whilst acknowledging that there was sometimes some difficulties in balancing study time with accessing enrichment opportunities.

7.	Governance Dashboard
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The Principal summarised the context in relation to the development of a new Governance Dashboard, confirming that the intention was that the dashboard consist of four quadrants focused on KPIs linked to the Quality of Education, Finance, Human Resources and Governance.

The Principal confirmed that reporting performance against KPIs in relation to Quality and Finance was already very well embedded but that more debate had taken place in relation to the KPIs linked to Human Resources, with a suggestion from members of the People and Organisational Development Committee that targets focus on those indicators that directly link to the quality of the student experience.

A discussion followed in relation to the content of the dashboard with additional suggestions being made by members including teacher performance, applications, staff utilisation and average class size.

A member further commented about the importance of linking the dashboard to the objectives contained within the Strategic Plan and it was confirmed that this would be the case. Members also requested that consideration be given to measures which don't fit naturally into the existing committee structure, for example net zero.

A member raised a query regarding RAG rating, and it was agreed that it would be important to include this, as well as trend information as part of the dashboard.

Finally, a member queried if there are currently sufficient student led KPIs, for example in relation to Wi-Fi connectivity, transport etc.

It was agreed that further work would take place in developing the dashboard bearing in mind the feedback received from governors and it was acknowledged that this would be an iterative process with amendments being made as the use of the dashboard becomes embedded.

Action: CB A30: Development of Governance Dashboard to be progressed taking into account feedback from Board members [Owner: Principal].

8.	Quality Monitoring Report
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8.1	Update on progress against the College QIP
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The Deputy Principal summarised the Quality Monitoring Report highlighting that the actions identified within the Quality Improvement Plan are progressing well and particularly that there has been a significant improvement in retention across two year programmes as a result of a number of interventions.

The Deputy Principal confirmed that A Level mock examination results were demonstrating positive distance travelled when compared with the previous year, in response to which a member queried the improvement required to match previous high levels of achievement in A Level provision. The Deputy Principal responded that a further improvement of c. 8% is required and it is anticipated that significant improvements will be secured this year and next. The Deputy Principal further commented that the matrix structure is currently working well within A Level provision and that a range of interventions were in place, including additional study skills sessions delivered by the student services team.

8.2 Preparation for Ofsted inspection

In relation to preparation for an Ofsted inspection, the Deputy Principal commented that participation in the ROQ process had been extremely good preparation for colleagues in the college. He confirmed that feedback had been very positive, and that staff feel very well prepared.

A member commented that the College appears to be making good progress in relation to quality improvement initiatives which were triangulated through the demonstrable improvements to the quality of the student experience.

9 Progress on the development of the new 3 year Strategic Plan

9.1 Progress on the development of the new 3 year Strategic Plan

The Principal summarised the work that had taken place in relation to the development of the new three year strategic plan following consultations with various groups of staff and college managers and confirmed that this activity continues with further consultation planned as part of the College Improvement Day in May.

The Principal confirmed that a consensus is beginning to emerge in relation to the mission statement, values and vision but that there is more work to do in relation to confirming the strategic priorities and objectives which was on-going, concluding that an update would be shared with the Board for consideration in May.

A member queried the priority linked to Student Recruitment and Retention suggesting that this should instead be more broadly focused around the Student Experience. A member also queried the use of ‘believe’ as part of the mission statement suggesting that ‘provide’ may be more appropriate.

It was agreed that governors provide any additional feedback via the Head of Governance to support the next stage of the development of the strategic plan.

Action: CB A31: Governors to provide any additional feedback regarding the Strategic Plan to the Head of Governance [Owner: Governors/Head of Governance]

9.2	Notes from Strategic Planning Meeting – 25 January 2024
<p>The notes from the Strategic Planning Meeting on 25 January 2024 were reviewed and approved as an accurate record.</p>	
10.	Safeguarding/Prevent Update
<p>The Deputy Principal presented the Safeguarding and Prevent update, confirming that the number of referrals in the current academic year matched those received in the previous year.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal confirmed that various improvements had been made to safeguarding processes which ensured that the approach taken was as proactive as possible, highlighting particularly the use of CPOMs to support transition from school to college. The Deputy Principal advised that alternative links were being established with schools who don't have this electronic system.</p> <p>A member queried the level of risk in relation to Safeguarding at the current time and the Deputy Principal advised that the level of risk was variable. A member asked to what extent we surveyed students in relation to their experience outside the classroom, for example focusing on questions in relation to support, safeguarding and wellbeing and the Deputy Principal confirmed that there was a plan in place to collect student feedback in this respect.</p>	
11.	Finance Monitoring Report
<p>The Vice Principal provided a paper summarising the Monthly Management Accounts as at the end of January 2024 and confirmed that the Monthly Management Accounts as at the end of February had been shared with Finance Committee members via email in order to ensure that governors received the most up to date information.</p> <p>The Vice Principal confirmed that the College was on track to meet all targets and the governors noted the update.</p>	
12.	Risk Register
<p>The Vice Principal provided an overview of the risk register highlighting particularly the ongoing mitigations in relation to IT security and/or cyber attack. A discussion followed in relation to this topic and a member suggested that the College seek additional support from its insurers in this respect.</p> <p>Action: CB A32: Insurers to be contacted regarding support available in relation to Cyber Security [Owner: Vice Principal Finance and Facilities]</p> <p>The Vice Principal confirmed that a range of audits/health checks are in progress or are planned and, in response to a member query, confirmed that the college employs a cyber risk expert.</p>	

A member reinforced the importance of ensuring that there is a link between the risks identified on the risk register and the KPIs included within the governance dashboard.

Action: CB A33: Governance Dashboard to include KPIs aligned to each of the key risks identified on the risk register [Owner: Principal/Vice Principal]

A member suggested the college consider the addition of a risk score to the risk register which will enable more effective tracking of the direction of travel.

Action: CB A34: Consideration to be given to the inclusion of a risk score as part of the risk register [Owner: Vice Principal Finance and Facilities]

Finally, a member suggested that the College consider disaggregating the risk relating to the decline in the Quality of Education at a more granular level in order to better monitor interventions and progress.

Action: CB A35: Consideration to be given to disaggregating the risk relating to the decline in the Quality of Education at a more granular level [Owner: Vice Principal Finance and Facilities]

13.	Policies for approval
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13.1	6th Form Admissions Policy
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It was confirmed that some amendments had been made to the 6th form admission policy with a new section being added in relation to the right to refuse admission in certain circumstances.

A member queried the wording of the third bullet point in section 3.4 and it was agreed that this be amended. A member asked if an appeals process was included in the policy and it was confirmed that this was the case.

Decision: CB D33: The Board approved the 6th form Admissions Policy with the change indicated above.

Action: CB A36: Amendment to be made to the 6th form Admissions Policy [Owner: Principal]

13.2	Disciplinary Procedure
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The Disciplinary Procedure was recommended for approval to the Board by the People and Organisational Development Committee following a small number of amendments including changing pronouns and the inclusion of mediation at every level.

Decision: CB D34 : The Board approved the Disciplinary Procedure

13.3	Disciplinary/Capability Procedure for Senior Post Holders
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The Disciplinary/Capability Procedure for Senior Post Holders was recommended for approval to the Board by the People and Organisational Development Committee.

Decision: CB D35: The Board approved the Disciplinary/Capability Procedure for Senior Post Holders

13.4 | Grievance Procedure

The Grievance Procedure was recommended for approval to the Board by the People and Organisational Development Committee.

Decision: CB D36 : The Board approved the Grievance Procedure

13.5 | Grievance Procedure for Senior Post Holders

The Grievance Procedure for Senior Post Holders was recommended for approval to the Board by the People and Organisational Development Committee.

Decision: CB D37: The Board approved the Grievance Procedure for Senior Post Holders

13.6 | Procedure for Dealing with Grievances Against Holders of Senior Posts

The Procedure for dealing with grievances against Holders of Senior Posts was recommended for approval to the Board by the People and Organisational Development Committee.

Decision: CB D38: The Board approved the Procedure for dealing with grievances against Holders of Senior Posts.

13.7 | Procedure for the appointment and re-appointment of Independent Governors

The Procedure for the appointment and re-appointment of Independent Governors was recommended for approval to the Board by the Search and Governance Committee following an overview of the context for developing this procedure by the Chair of the Board.

Decision: CB D39: The Board approved the Procedure for the appointment of Independent Governors

13.8 | Procedure for the appraisal of Independent Governors

The Procedure for the appraisal of Independent Governors was recommended for approval to the Board by the Search and Governance Committee following an overview of the context for developing this procedure by the Chair of the Board.

Decision: CB D40: The Board approved the Procedure for the appraisal of Independent Governors

14.	Annual Reports for Approval
14.1	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2022/23
<p>The Principal advised that some amendments were required to this report and confirmed that this would be resubmitted for approval in May.</p> <p>Action: CB A37: The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2022/23 to be submitted for approval as part of the May Corporation Board meeting [Owner: Head of Governance]</p>	
14.2	Gender Pay Gap Report
<p>The Gender Pay Gap Report was recommended to the Board for approval by the People and Organisational Development Committee.</p> <p>A discussion followed regarding the pay gap and the reasons for this being the case and a member suggested that it would be beneficial to expand the cohort analysis in order to provide additional detail.</p> <p>Action: CB A38: Cohort analysis to be expanded for future reports in order to provide additional detail [Owner: Director of HR]</p> <p>Decision: CB D41: The Board approved the Gender Pay Gap Report</p>	
15.	Governance Impact Statement
<p>The committee identified the following in terms of impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion and subsequent proposals in relation to the content and format of the Governance Dashboard • Ongoing focus on improvements to the quality of provision • Discussion in relation to financial risk • Proposal in relation to the use of risk ratings • Input in relation to mission and values • Governor appointments/re-appointments • Approval of policies 	
16.	Confidentiality
<p>None identified</p>	
17.	Date of next meeting
<p>Governor Training Session – 16 May: 5.15 – 6.00 pm Corporation Board Meeting – 16 May: 6.00 – 8.00 pm</p>	