

MINUTES OF A CORPORATION meeting
held on Tuesday 8 July 2025
At 5.00 pm at Lackham campus, AgriTech & Science Centre A1

Present	Paddy Bradley (Chair), Clive Barker, Janet Bolton, Jenny Davies, Philippa Gray, Lewis Gittins, Iain Hatt, Brian Humphreys, Rachael Lawes, Justin Purkis, Lily Raynor-Blundell
In Attendance	<i>Steve Campion (Deputy Principal Corporate Resources), Jo Grenfell (Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality) and Heather Cross (Director of Governance), Jana Murray (Director of Governance and Compliance Designate)</i>

Item	Minute	Action
2024-25 6/1	Apologies for absence, welcome and Chair's opening remarks	
	<p>Apologies were received from Daisy Agathine-Louise, Tim Cooper, Emily Palmer and Katie Walker.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all governors and welcomed Jana Murray, Director of Governance and Compliance Designate to the meeting. He reminded governors this was the last meeting of the outgoing Director of Governance, Heather Cross.</p> <p>This was also the last meeting for the outgoing HE Student Governor, Lewis Gittins, who was marking this occasion with a report concerning his work and recommendations for the future operation of the Student Alliance. The Chair commented that Lewis had won a community award for Crimestoppers and had been nominated as SW police cadet of the year.</p> <p>Heather Cross thanked the Chair for his kind words on her retirement and gave a few words about her career, as well as thanking governors and her colleagues at the college.</p> <p>The Chair commented on recent college events which were attended by governors. Vice-Chair Janet Bolton commented on having attended the Student Awards and enjoying the feel-good factor and being impressed by so many inspirational student success stories. Other governors and the Chair had attended the Staff Awards event recently and been particularly pleased to see the very strong team spirit and mutual support and encouragement of colleagues. The Chair encouraged as many governors as possible to attend student award and other college events in the coming year.</p>	
2024-25 6/2	Declarations of interest	
	None	
2024-25 6/3	Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising	
	<p><u>Minutes of the meeting held 8 and 9 May 2025 and of the special meeting held 5 June 2025</u></p> <p>The minutes of these meetings which had been circulated previously were approved as a true record of the meetings subject to an amendment to minute 2024-25 5/5 paragraph 2 last line to read, ".....lower than target</p>	

	<p>performance on apprenticeships which was £383K down <i>further than the previous reported forecast.....</i>"</p> <p><u>Matters arising</u></p> <p>None other than already on the agenda.</p>	
2024-25 6/4	Student Alliance Report	
	<p>The HE Student Governor, Lewis Gittins, gave a presentation concerning the work he had been involved with over the past year, comments from HE students collected, events he had attended, and he made a series of recommendations concerning the future development of the Student Alliance and the involvement of student governors. More detailed feedback from HE students collated by Lewis was available from the Director of Governance for any governor who wished to request it.</p> <p>Key recommendations were discussed including membership of the Unloc Changemaker programme, the greater involvement of Student Engagement Officers in working with the Student Alliance and their membership of NAMMS to increase their knowledge and understanding of the support they could give, an allocated budget for the Student Alliance and further work to increase hearing the student voice.</p> <p>Action: Arrange membership of the Unloc Changemaker programme</p> <p>The intention was reported to the meeting that Executive Directors at each campus should promote opportunities to students and lead on-campus student voice events. The opportunity for the new Student Governors and Student Alliance officers to visit other regional colleges where the student voice activity was well developed to identify other good practice was encouraged by governors and they encouraged that the HE Manager should meet with the students to consider the feedback collected.</p> <p>Governors supported all the recommendations made in the report and requested that once new student appointments were made and established that there should be a report on implementation and further developments.</p> <p>Governors thanked Lewis Gittins for his work and strong commitment to taking forward the Student Alliance over the past year and wished him every success in the future.</p>	JK/JM

<p>2024-25 6/5</p>	<p>Strategy re Technical Excellence Colleges</p>	
	<p>A report from the Principal/CEO updating governors on the bidding position to the Department for Education for Construction Technical Excellence College (CTEC) status and offering comments on the likely bidding position for future status for other subjects had been circulated previously and the Principal/CEO introduced the various considerations. Key questions posed in the report related to the college's capacity and resources, alignment with strategy, arrangements for monitoring, the security of funding and any impact on current provision.</p> <p>The Principal spoke about the relative strength of the college's position in bidding to be a Construction Technical Excellence College, due to the short timescales, discussed and strongly supported at the Quality and Standards and Finance and Resources Committees. The college's bid was supported by other colleges in the region, with very strong employer support. The timescale for DfE decision-making was very short and the intention was for successful bidders to be starting on design in September. Information about how the new centres would operate and how the resources were intended to operate were relatively limited, but a hub and spoke model with resources for kit and regional training were anticipated. If successful, the college would appoint a project lead.</p> <p>Governors fully supported the bid which had been made for Construction and thanked college management for acting quickly to prepare a strong bid against a very short timescale and limited information. They discussed the wider implications of future bidding.</p> <p>Governors welcomed the opportunities that both this bid and potential future bids offered to raise the college profile of the strong work it was doing, they encouraged the College Senior Leadership Team actively to consider any new opportunities to bid whilst ensuring this was not at the expense of current quality and suggested that resources may need to be used to develop bids so as not to distract from current activity.</p> <p>It was AGREED that future bids for Technical Excellence College status should be actively pursued subject to the considerations discussed.</p>	
<p>2024-25 6/6</p>	<p>Budget for 25-26 year and 3 Year Plan</p>	
	<p>A summary presentation on the Budget for 25-26, the three-year plan and the impact on cash flow and financial health had been circulated together with the 2025/26 Budget proposal paper as recommended by the Finance and Resources Committee.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal Corporate Resources introduced the budget proposals, commenting on the lengthy process to prepare the budget, fundamentally based on considerable curriculum planning and detailed budget assessment. He commented on how the definite allocation information from government had been exceptionally late this year, with final allocations only being received in late June. Increased cost weightings however were very welcome. There were considerable increases in high needs learner numbers. The Colleges Partnership budget was lower than expected.</p> <p>Key data related to the budget was noted, including £48.95m projected turnover, a surplus just above £1m and the inclusion of a pay award. There</p>	

	<p>was the possibility that the college would receive exceptional in-year funding, but this could not be assumed and therefore was not included. All financial metrics would be met.</p> <p>The cladding project for Trowbridge was to be brought to the Autumn term Finance and Resources Committee for consideration. Capital commitments had not assumed this at present.</p> <p>Action: Add agenda item to September F & R to consider Trowbridge cladding project.</p> <p>The Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee drew the meeting's attention to the review by that committee about the budget and its overall comfort with what was proposed. There would be consideration about how cash balances could contribute to future capital works at the next meeting of the committee, and this information would be brought to the Board after that.</p> <p>Governors asked various questions testing the budget, including the information presented to unions in discussion on a proposed pay award, pay progression measures and the allocation to premises maintenance given higher building usage (this would be supplemented by direct allocations from the Department for Education).</p> <p>After further discussion the Budget for 25/26 and the associated 3-year plan were APPROVED for submission to the Department for Education.</p>	JM
2024- 25 6/7	Discussion on FE Commissioner report on Governance at Weston College	
	<p>A report had been circulated previously showing how this college compared to the governance recommendations made to Weston College by the FE Commissioner. The Director of Governance gave a short summary of how the college compared against the recommendations made in the FEC report. Overall, the position was favourable and the only area where this college might consider a change to improve transparency of decision making was to amend the delegation to the Remuneration Committee for the approval of Senior postholder salaries. The Chair commented that this college should continue to uphold the highest principles of good governance and transparency of decision making was one of these and he recommended amending the delegation arrangements as a consequence.</p> <p>The Board considered the report and the recommendation to amend the delegation to the Remuneration Committee and AGREED that this be changed such that this Committee should in future make recommendations to the Board for senior postholder salaries.</p> <p>There was discussion concerning the potential weaknesses in External Audit which had been identified at Weston College, noting that the actions which that college had chosen to take should not be possible any longer for any college post -reclassification with the restrictions now implemented through the Managing Public Money rules.</p> <p>The Board noted the recent Ofsted report of Burnley College where governors had been criticised for not asking questions concerning reports based on erroneously inflated student qualifications data. The Chair encouraged all governors to maintain their curiosity and questioning as these were fundamental to good governance.</p>	

<p>2024-25 6/8</p>	<p>Principal's Report and safeguarding update report</p>	
	<p>The Principal's Report had been circulated previously.</p> <p>Key issues concerning quality assurance, college events and employer engagement, marketing and communications, finance and funding, People Strategy and Student Awards were all noted.</p> <p>The Principal spoke to his report, giving a summary presentation and flagged the successful attendance initiative utilised throughout the year and the intention to continue its use into the next academic year. He commented that student applications were continuing to increase. In response to questioning about the possible reasons why, he commented that this resulted from better targeted marketing and the investment in facilities in which people wanted to learn. Given the volume of likely enrolments, the college was using 4 enrolment days again.</p> <p>Governors asked questions about the adequacy of college space, given significantly increased student numbers and whether students would need to be turned away. In response it was commented that this was unlikely in the coming year, where it should be possible to redirect students even if it wasn't their first choice.</p> <p>Against the People Strategy, the staff survey results would be shared with governors at the next meeting. The recent survey had generated more responses than previously. Workload and Wellbeing were the areas where there was the largest volume of comment. The significant change to the college HR system was proving very successful to date.</p> <p>Action: Add agenda item to review staff survey results at October board meeting.</p> <p>The Principal/ CEO spoke about the circulated Safeguarding report, noting the student death in an offsite accident.</p> <p>The Principal/ CEO was thanked for his report.</p>	<p>JM/IH/GL</p>
<p>2023-24 6/9</p>	<p>Balanced Scorecard</p>	
	<p>The May 24/25 Balanced Scorecard report had been circulated previously and the covering summary report highlighting achievement, apprenticeship achievement, health and safety incidents, unfilled staff vacancies, staff turnover and work experience.</p> <p>Governors asked questions concerning the accident statistics having hit the threshold, but this was noted to be because the target was lower than the numbers last year, with increased enrolments. The College had wanted to see better reporting, and this had proved to be the case, although incidents being often health related rather than safety issues had skewed the data.</p> <p>Achievement was still a strong focus, working with some young people to support their achievement, especially focussing on distance learning. For apprentices there were daily updates on end point assessment bookings</p> <p>Governors proposed that the Balanced Scorecard should be moved up the Board agenda in future, to facilitate more discussion of items and relate it to the risk register, which should be the starting point. This was AGREED.</p>	

	<p>Action: Move the Balanced Scorecard higher up the board agenda in the future.</p> <p>Governors asked about the college’s implementation of Martyn’s Law and were updated about the inhouse group considering arrangements, the external support provided by Wiltshire Council and the training being planned, including practice drills. A training session and a dress rehearsal drill with staff was planned for the summer holidays, to identify the issues to be resolved. It was noted that the new Director of Estates had received training on Martyn’s Law. It was requested that the Principal’s report at the next meeting should include a report on progress.</p> <p>Action: Principal to provide an update on progress against Martyn’s Law in his next report.</p> <p>The Chair apologised that insufficient progress had been made in recruiting new staff governors and said that those staff who had applied would be notified as soon as possible concerning selection arrangements.</p> <p>Action: Contact staff who applied for staff governor roles and progress the next stages.</p>	<p>JM</p> <p>IH</p> <p>IH/PB/JM</p>
2024- 25 6/10	Amendments to the Instrument of Government and Standing Orders	
	<p>A report had been circulated previously notifying governors of two requests from the Department for Education for Boards to amend their constitutional documents in two respects – the removal of the reference to the Secretary of State in appointing new governors where numbers had fallen below the minimum quorum accepted and the removal of any restrictions for student governors under the age of 18 to take part in financial decisions. Both these changes were AGREED, and consequently clause 4.1 of the Instrument of Government would have any reference to the Secretary of State removed, clause 4.2 of the Instrument of Government would be deleted and current clause 7.8 of the Standing Orders would be deleted.</p>	
2024-25 6/11	Recommendations from Committees	
	<p>a. <u>Financial Regulations Update</u></p> <p>An update/refresh of the Financial Regulations had been carried out and was recommended to the Board by the Finance and Resources Committee. The revised version of the Financial Regulations had been circulated with the agenda papers. The updated version of the Financial Regulations was APPROVED.</p> <p>b. External Audit Plan for 24-25</p> <p>The External Audit Plan for the 24-25 year audit had been considered by the Audit Committee and was recommended to the Board and had been circulated with the agenda papers. The External Audit Plan for 24-25 was APPROVED.</p>	

2024-25 6/12	Report from Quality and Standards Committee held 24 6 25	
	The report from the Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee of the meeting held on 24 June 2025 which had been circulated previously was noted.	
2024-25 6/13	Quality Improvement Plan	
	The latest Quality Improvement Plan 2024-25 which had been circulated previously was discussed and was received. College staff were commended in continuing to take actions to make improvements.	
2024-25 6/14	Report from Finance and Resources Committee held 17 6 25	
	The report from the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee of the meeting held 17 June 2025 which had been circulated previously was noted.	
2024-25 6/15	Management Accounts	
	The latest Management Accounts, Period 10 which had been circulated previously were noted and received. There were no matters reported of concern or of significant movement since the last report.	
2024-25 6/16	Report from Audit Committee Chair meeting held 1 7 25	
	The report from the Chair of the Audit Committee of the meeting held 1 July 2025 which had been circulated previously was noted.	
2024-25 6/17	Risk Register – Top Ten Risks	
	The latest Top Ten Risks report reviewed by the Audit Committee which had been circulated previously was considered and noted.	
2024-25 6/18	Governance	
	<p>a. Skills Audit Report A report summarising the skills and experience of Board members, following recent returns from all members had been circulated previously. This was noted as a useful document to consider any skills gaps when recruiting new governors.</p> <p>b. Governance Action Plan update The latest Governance Action Plan update which had been circulated previously was noted and received.</p>	
2024-25 6/19	Emerging Issues and Aspirations – meeting evaluation	
	The meeting evaluations questions had been circulated previously, and governors were encouraged to submit their views either to the Chair or the Governance Professional.	
2024-25 6/20	Date of Next Meeting	
	This was noted as 14 October 2025	

2024-25 6/21	PART II Confidential Rem Com Report and recommendations	
	See separate minutes	
	The meeting closed at 7.40 pm	

ACTIONS

ITEM NO	ITEM	OWNER	COMPLETED
2024-25 6/4	Arrange membership of the Unloc Changemaker programme.	JK/JM	
2024-25 6/6	Add agenda item to September F & R to consider Trowbridge cladding project.	JM	
2024-25 6/8	Add agenda item to present staff survey results at October board meeting.	IH/JM	
2023-24 6/9	Move the Balanced Scorecard higher up the board agenda in the future.	JM	
2023-24 6/9	Principal to provide an update on progress against Martyn's Law in his next report.	IH	
2023-24 6/9	Contact staff who applied for staff governor roles and progress to the next stages.	IH/PB/JM	