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Wiltshire College and
University Centre
External Governance Review

January 2026 – April 2026

Bath
Birmingham
Cambridge
Leeds
London
Manchester



Introduction

This external governance review of Wiltshire College and University Centre (“the College”) was commissioned by the Governing Board in November 2025 and was undertaken by Stone King LLP, specifically Alison Shillito (Consultant).

The review of governance took place in the context of the most recent inspection by Ofsted (November 2022) which graded the overall opinion of Wiltshire College and University Centre as ‘good’. The report included positive comments on the impact of leaders and governors on curriculum change and promoting a culture of transparency.

We would like to thank all the contributors from Wiltshire College and University Centre for their time and insight regarding governance at the College.

Code of Governance

The Governing Board of the College has adopted the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges to guide its approach to governing. Therefore, this review takes this code as the basis for the review. This review does not constitute an audit of compliance with the code of governance.

We understand that a full and robust review of compliance against the Code, with evidence to support the outcomes, is undertaken periodically and was most recently undertaken in October 2024. Whilst this review is not an audit against code expectations, this review took account of these in reaching an understanding of governing practice.

Methodology

The methodology adopted for this review, undertaken between January 2026 and April 2026 was as follows:

- Observation of the Governing Board in person (24 March 2026) and Audit Committee on-line meeting (5 March 2026)
- Interviews with the Chair of the Governing Board, some governors, Chief Executive/Principal, senior staff, and Director of Governance and Compliance (Governance Professional and Clerk to the Corporation)
- Desk review of core governance documentation supplied by the Governance Professional including consideration of action taken in response to the 2023 External Governance Review.

CONTENTS

Our external governance review documentation is provided in two parts:

- **KEY REFLECTIONS**
 - Executive summary
 - Table of reflections on what works well, what could work better and new ideas
 - Recommendations

- **MAIN REPORT**
 - Strategy and planning
 - Capability and culture
 - Structures and processes
 - Appendices: meeting observations

The 'Key Reflections' section is designed to present our messages in a clear and accessible format. The content of the Key Reflections derives from our review of governance documentation, observation of meetings (as listed above), and interviews with key governance role players. To assist understanding of our key reflections and supporting the creation of a governance action plan, our accumulated evidence and commentary is provided in the section headed 'Main Report'.

KEY REFLECTIONS

Executive Summary

In summary, this review recognises that the governing of the College is committed, positive, challenging and demonstrates ambition. There is a supportive and enquiring governing culture which produces effective governing in meetings and promotes transparency. This is a capable Governing Board with a relevant range of skills and experience that includes governors with relevant professional qualifications in education (FE and Secondary) finance, audit, risk and human resources. The Board has increased the diversity of its membership (for age, gender and disability) since the last External Governance Review. Governors are diligent in performing their governor responsibilities.

There is potential for development by making aspects of governing more strategically focussed, better organised, and therefore, more productive.

The Governing Board considered the recommendations of the May 2023 External Review of Governance and prioritised action on those recommendations assessed as most likely to generate most benefit. The selected recommendations formed the basis of a new Governance Action Plan. The Board has made progress on the Governance Action Plan, which was made whilst recruiting a new Chair in Autumn 2024 and a new Governance Professional in Spring 2025. The College is continuing to support the induction and development of the new Governance Professional. The detail in the Main Report and suggestions in the meeting observations appendix are intended to contribute to that development.

The following table is intended to provide a summary, based on our evidence, of what works well, what could work better and offer some new ideas.

<p>Works Well</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors and leaders are proud of the College as an anchor institution in Wiltshire and its positive impact on student outcomes, its campus improvements and making a strong contribution to local and regional skills • The Board has used the Department of Education support for FE governor recruitment to good effect not only to fill vacancies but also to diversify the profile of its membership • Governors have relevant skills and experience and use those to provide appropriate challenge and support • Governor attendance is very good at board and committee meetings, and many governors also attend deep dive presentations, college events and Quality and Resource Review meetings to expand their understanding of College issues • At every meeting, the Governing Board receives a thorough set of Key Performance Indicators that link directly to Strategic Objectives • The distribution of strategic risks to committees is well established and promotes collective responsibility for the College's strategic risks • Committee Chairs provide effective summary reports to the Governing Board, which focus on assurance, risks, advice and the approval recommendations • Governor strategy events are planned and address key strategic questions for the Governing Board • The Task and Finish Group reviewing the Scheme of Delegation and the development of a new policy framework are making good progress and will support increasing the Board's focus on strategy.
<p>Could work better</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop governance processes for self-assessment into a more meaningful annual evaluation of governance approach, performance and impact • Reshape the standard Board agenda to include a clear governance purpose for every item and to include a concise Strategic Progress Report as the opening "Strategic" item for each meeting

- Review the format for governance cover reports to emphasise clear purpose, easy engagement, and a recommendation for decision making. Consistent use of cover reports would aid more productive governing and help meetings run to time
- Further develop the top ten risk register into a shorter strategic risk register for the Governing Board that includes assurance mapping and risk appetite indicators, linked to the (new) College Strategy
- Allocate or recruit at least one additional member to Audit Committee
- Enhance the Governor Training Plan with a more detailed training policy explaining what governors are required to do and maintain a record of governor completion of training

New ideas

- Develop Governing Board frameworks (including systems, controls and impact statements) for student, staff and stakeholder voice so that governors know when they will receive feedback and information on action taken to address issues
- Pick-up the work on succession planning, starting with a refresh of the Governor Skills Audit so that the skills audit and succession plan address the skills, experience and diverse board profile that the board wants to develop
- Consider a committee or other means to increase governor oversight of governor recruitment/search and governance to support the Governance Professional to implement the review recommendations, improve governance processes and enhance their own professional development
- Devise a Governor Appointment Policy with specific Equality, Diversity and Inclusion objectives to continue the work done on increasing diversity
- Provide guidance to Link and Lead Governors on their role or a common protocol for governors attending college outside board/committee meetings
- Consider requiring Safeguarding, Health & Welfare, EDI and Sustainability strategies to have strategic action plans with impact statements to aid effective board oversight of progress
- Audit Committee to include committee-level feedback on risk assurance to report a full picture of board assurance across the Strategic Risk Register.

Recommendations

- Any recommendations which are adopted by the Governing Board should be placed in a specific plan for design, implementation and monitoring of effectiveness.
- The Governing Board is encouraged to use the text of this report as well as the summary table below in reaching an agenda for continued improvement.