

MEETING OF THE CORPORATION BOARD

MINUTES

Some Minutes have been redacted from the published version on the grounds of commercial or personal confidentiality.

Date	Wednesday 26 March 2025
Time	17:00 to 19:35
Location	The Edge Building, Weybridge
Present (Governors):	Professor Craig Mahoney (Chair) Jesse Adekoya Rowen Baker (Student Governor) Fiona Capstick Lee Chantry (Staff Governor) Mitchell Fletcher (Student Governor) Adam Herriott (from 18:00) Mary Hughes Maureen McDermott (Staff Governor) Hilary Omissi Jackie Pearson Paul Stedman Christine Ricketts (Principal and Chief Executive)
Officers and advisers In attendance	Sarah Clancey (Assistant Principal Education) - APE Lorne Richardson (Assistant Principal Curriculum) -APC Allan Tyrer (Chief Operating Officer) - COO Melissa Drayson (Director of Governance) - DG Melissa Breedon (Head of Safeguarding) – Item 5.2 only
Observers	Paul Mittendorfer, Department for Education
Apologies for absence	Dr Andrew Gilchrist James Measures Rebecca Page-Tickell Meyrick Vevers
Quorum (6)	The meeting was quorate throughout

Item	Action lead
1. Preliminary items	
1.1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence	

The Chair welcomed attendees and noted apologies for absence (listed above).

Governors were reminded to sign WhatsApp protocol forms and review their website bios.

1.2 Declarations of interest

There were no new declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda. Previously declared interests were carried forward.

1.3 Urgent other business notified in advance.

No requests to raise urgent items of other business had been made in advance

2. Minutes

2.1 Minutes of the Corporation meeting on 18 December 2025

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be APPROVED as an accurate record, and confidential sections be confirmed.

2.2 Matters arising and actions carried forward.

Supporting paper by the Director of Governance

Most actions from the previous meeting had been completed or were covered by items on the agenda. Two actions remained in progress, and an update was provided:

- Work was underway to resolve external access issues that were currently preventing Virtual College from being used as a platform for online governor training.
- The launch of the new data dashboard was currently anticipated early in the Summer term. The Teaching and Learning Committee had received a demonstration of the prototype at its March meeting.

3. Student Governors and Student Voice report

The Student Governors presented on:

- The Surrey Colleges trip to Bali, attended by Rowen Baker
- Feedback from student voice activities during the Spring Term.

Bali Trip:

Rowen provided feedback on the Balinese cultural and arts activities experienced during the trip, which was taken by students from all four Surrey colleges. The trip was funded through a joint bid to the Alan Turing fund (which had replaced Erasmus), with plans for future bids to support similar activities

The presentation and discussion focused on the positive impact of the trip on delegates' self-confidence, particularly as they had to make a presentation to students from other colleges. In response to

questions, Rowen reflected on the positive outlook on life that she had observed in the Balinese people.

Student Conference and Student Council Feedback

Mitchell presented the key themes that had emerged from the Student Conference on 22 January, which had then been followed up at Student Council and in personal development classes in March. Both events had been well attended by governors.

The focus of the activities had been to gather feedback and agree on actions under eight headings:

1. Future of work and money worries
2. Climate change and sustainability
3. Health and Mental Well-being
4. College Vision and Community
5. Technology and Society
6. Teaching, Learning and Achievement
7. Enrichment and Student Experience
8. Arts and Culture (Celebrating EDI)

Members of the management team provided input on actions taken so far in response to the feedback.

Governors raised a range of questions and discussion points.

- A suggestion was made to incorporate money management into maths classes. The College engaged Barclays Bank to provide a staff member to give financial information and advice to students in personal development sessions.
- Concerns raised by students on cannabis use were being addressed through bag searches, and prompt action had been taken as required. The Student Council had flagged concerns about the increasing use of cannabis vapes. Governors were informed that the College would be smoking and vaping free from September and that students and staff would be offered smoking cessation support.
- Governors stressed the need to explore new technology to support communication with students. It was noted that some colleges, such as Nescot, had developed bespoke platforms.
- Discussions on student enrichment had identified the need for more activities that would attract female students, including women's sports
- The introduction of the prayer room was commended, but this needed to be better publicised. There should also be similar facilities at Ashford Campus.
- Invitations would be issued to students and staff to join the Elmbridge Council group for feedback on climate control across the Borough.

The Corporation noted the quality of the discussions and questions raised and commended the student governors for an excellent report. Progress on addressing key issues would continue to be monitored through the Teaching and Learning Committee.

4. Principal and Chief Executive's Report, including performance against KPIs

Supporting paper and presentation by the Principal and CEO

The main report and KPI dashboard were taken as read. Based on the information provided, governors were engaged in a strategic discussion using a series of prompt questions:

- What impact is College activity having on the learner experience?
- What is important to know in terms of regional/national updates?
- What are the key takeaways from the CEO Report?
- Are there any areas where you have concerns or require further clarification?

Impact on learner experience

Governors raised concerns from the Student Council about smaller outside space, classroom moves, and timetabling, emphasising the need to listen to and consult with students on an ongoing basis.

The next phase of the estates project was flagged as potentially being more disruptive and highlighted further the need for strong and frequent communication with learners. Management acknowledged these risks and reported that the College was working closely with Cala Homes to mitigate them and to timetable major classroom moves over the holiday period. The student governors commented that they had been kept informed about forthcoming classroom moves by their teachers. A question was raised about the need to mitigate any potential risk to English and maths attainment caused by classroom moves.

There was discussion about the potential link between financial investment and learner experience, in particular, levels of spending on staff. The Principal responded that the Executive Team was currently reviewing organisational capacity and potential investment at middle leadership level.

Governors questioned the impact of timetabling in English and maths attendance as a potential area for improvement, as students were less likely to come into College if English or maths was the only lesson that day. Management explained the challenges with timetabling and reported that there were attendance issues even when students were already on site for their core study programme.

Governors commented that it would be helpful for governors, staff and students if the KPI dashboard could reflect where progress was being made.

Regional/national policy

Governors identified devolution, the new Ofsted framework and funding changes as key areas of policy that would impact on the College

strategically. The potential conflict of interest for Surrey County Council as both a future funder and provider of adult education was raised.

The FE Commissioner led (SPA) Structure and Prospects Appraisal process was a key current concern. An update on the process was given and further updates would be provided as the SPA progressed through the Expressions of Interest phase.

The Corporation confirmed that the report aligned well with the College's five strategic aims, providing evidence that most were being achieved. The previous year's staff recruitment challenges were being addressed through positive messaging about the College's successes and its new branding.

The Government's announcement on College centres of excellence for construction should present an opportunity for further growth. Nonetheless, governors advised that student number growth would require close monitoring, especially in the light of reductions in T-Level and adult funding, and plateauing demographics in 2028.

Governors welcomed the different approach taken to presenting the Principal and CEO's report.

AGREED: That further updates on the SPA process would be provided by email.

DG/PCEO

5. Curriculum, Quality and Learner Experience

5.1 Teaching and Learning Committee report and recommendations *Supporting paper presented by the Chair of the T&L Committee.*

The Corporation noted apologies for the late circulation of the paper. The Chair reported that the Committee meeting had taken place after the governor Teaching and Learning day. The focus had been on English and maths and attendance as areas for continuing improvement, but many positive developments had also been highlighted. Attention was particularly drawn to:

- a reassuring presentation of the new dashboard
- an excellent learner recruitment and marketing report that included data tables and graphs on admissions per feeder school, including a comparison of 16-18 numbers with numbers of school leavers. Of particular note was the correlation with recruitment from schools with the biggest issues with attendance.
- A briefing on Apprenticeships, demonstrating areas for growth and future development.
- A comprehensive draft curriculum strategy that set out the College's approach to meeting local skills needs and clear curriculum pathways for learners.

The governors who had attended the Teaching and Learning Day provided a brief report. One governor commented that this had been the most valuable day they had spent in College. Five lessons had been observed, with some examples of excellent teaching, including in T Levels, as well as one example where poor behaviour had not been

challenged. It was recommended that all non-education governors should engage in future events to gain an understanding of the classroom experience.

AGREED: That governors receive an update on any actions taken following the day, and their impact. AP: E

5.2 Safeguarding, Prevent and Student Wellbeing mid-year report *Supporting paper presented by the Head of Safeguarding.*

The Corporation noted and discussed

- Current staffing of the Safeguarding and Wellbeing team
- The Government Review of the Prevent Duty following Southport, aimed at lowering the intervention threshold. The College was taking steps to respond to changes in policy, and continued to work closely with other local agencies. Staff undertook mandatory training every two years. Students received termly input through their Personal Development sessions.
- The need to refresh governors Prevent training. A range of online and face-to-face options were presented.
- A continuing increase in referrals (712 compared to 633 in 2023-24), and the number of daily transactions (from 46 to 72). These had peaked at enrolment as the team had worked proactively to identify learner issues at an early stage.
- There had been no LADO referrals or serious incidents during the year.
- A range of safeguarding literature had been produced in collaboration with other departments.
- Issues relating to Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) were being proactively addressed through termly activities.
- A proactive approach was being taken to support young carers.

The Staff Governors highlighted positive messaging for all students about the introduction of a knife arch, and attributed some of the increase in referrals to increased trust in the safeguarding team.

The Safeguarding Governor commented on the potential impact of early intervention in preventing serious issues further down the line.

AGREED: That Prevent training for governors would be organised DG/ HoSG

7. Finance and Resources

7.1 F&R Committee report and recommendations *Supporting paper and minutes of the meeting on 5 March, presented by Paul Stedman in the absence of the Chair*

The Corporation noted the Committee report and minutes, in particular that there had been a detailed discussion on risks and sensitivities relating to the financial plan. A briefing paper by the Chief Operating Officer had been included in the pack and would be relevant to the discussion of the draft financial plan under item 7.3.

The Committee recommended approval of the Staff Code of Conduct,

7.2 February 2025 Management Accounts

Presented by the Chief Operating Officer

The February position was consistent with the January accounts that had been discussed by Finance and Resources Committee. The target EBITDA was on track; income was slightly above target and pay costs were slightly down, although this was partly due to some posts currently being filled by consultants. The year-end surplus was on track to be achieved, and cash flow was strong throughout the year.

Governors sought assurance that the increases in National Insurance and minimum wage had been factored into the figures. The impact of the minimum wage increase was being assessed as part of a review of the bottom two staff pay bands to ensure all staff were on the right point. There was leeway in next year's budget to cover any increased costs. It was understood that Colleges would receive grant funding in September to cover increased National Insurance costs, and that this would be backdated to April.

7.3 10-year financial plan

Supporting paper by the Chief Operating Officer

The Corporation received the latest draft plan, which presented a 'worst case' and a 'likely case'.

The 16-18 allocation for 2024-25 had now been confirmed, leading to an increase in funding of over £500k compared to the original estimate. Provision of £200k would be included, however, for T Level under-enrolment.

A target for pay costs of 65% had been included, reflecting plans to invest in additional posts to support teaching and learning. Governors supported this move.

Governors asked for more clarity about how much of the anticipated growth in income related to increased learner numbers, and how much related to increases in funding rates. It was agreed that it would be helpful to see student number projections in future reports.

Management advised that the overall income figures masked some variability. The 16-18 funding rate would increase by 3.5%, there was planned growth in apprenticeship numbers and additional funding was being made available for construction. However, adult and T Level funding rates were due to be reduced.

The draft figures and underlying assumptions had yet to be fully aligned with the curriculum plan but would be presented together at the Corporation Strategy Day on 14th May as part of the standalone case.

AGREED: that future financial plans would include student number projections.

**COO/
APC**

7.4 Estates project update and capital expenditure report.

Verbal update by the Chief Operating Officer

The Corporation noted that the Finance and Resources Committee had received a detailed report.

An update was provided that solutions had been found for the issues encountered during the Barnes Wallis refurbishment, which would minimise disruption and maintain the timescale for completion. Although these would incur additional cost, the project remained well within the overall contingency.

The demolition of the Link was due to commence in the Spring holiday with the removal of the roof. A local ecology organisation would be assisting with the relocation of the bats.

The F&R Committee had received a detailed report on capital income and expenditure. The next tranche of money from Cala Homes was due to be received the following week. In addition, it was reported that all DfE capital grant funding would be spent by the end of March deadline.

7.5 Extension of the IT Services Contract

Supporting paper by the Chief Operating Officer

The current three-year contract with Logixx permitted an extension without the need to retender on a 1 year plus 1 year basis. The new proposal included a 10% increase on previous contracts to cover the rise in National Insurance costs.

The need for continuity and organisational knowledge during the estates project was agreed to be paramount. It was noted that the relationships between Logixx and the College were also excellent

RESOLVED: That the proposal to extend the contract with Logixx for IT services for an additional two years [redacted] be APPROVED.

8. Audit and Risk

8.1 Audit and Risk Committee report and recommendations

Supporting paper and Minutes of the meeting on 26 February presented by the Director of Governance

Key headlines were:

- The Committee had received training on the new Procurement Act from Surrey County Council. This had been open to all governors.
- There were no internal audit reports to consider.
- A tendering process for both internal and external audit would be launched in April to make an appointment in June.

8.2 Risk Register

Supporting paper presented by the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and Chief Operating Officer.

Minutes of Corporation meeting on 26 March 2025 – approved

The updated corporate risk register was reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee on 26 February. The Committee noted the incorporation of capital plans and specific concerns about attendance, particularly in maths and English. Overall financial risk had reduced. A deep dive into the SPA process highlighted staff uncertainty and management capacity as key risks, with measures in place for communication and monitoring. An update was also provided on the estate redevelopment and any associated risk

RESOLVED: That the risk register be endorsed as a fair reflection of current strategic risk.

9. Governance and Compliance

9.1 Governance improvement plan 2024-25

Supporting paper presented by the Director of Governance

Governors noted that the GIP brought together areas for development and recommendations from the external governance review and the Corporation's self-assessment activities. Most of the actions were on track, although some, such as increasing board diversity, would remain an ongoing priority.

9.2 Brooklands Enterprises Ltd

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report and Accounts for the dormant subsidiary, Brooklands Enterprises Ltd, be APPROVED and signed by the directors.

10. Urgent Other Business

There was no other business.

11. Evaluation of the meeting

The post-meeting questionnaire had had a low response rate, so an agenda item had been introduced as an alternative evaluation approach. Governors were specifically asked to comment on:

Paperwork: This was considered to be good within the confines of the Corporation's regulatory responsibilities, although there had been two late papers. The board pack length had been significantly reduced but further enhancements could still be made. The need to include papers just 'for noting' was challenged.

The balance of business: Generally, it was agreed that the meeting had focused on the right areas. All papers and reports needed to refer back to the impact on students.

Discussion time vs. presentation time: The new approach to presenting the CEO report was welcomed, and it was suggested that all future reports should include questions for governors.

Strategic input: Governors felt that the discussion had been at the right level in terms of strategic input.

AGREED: That the post-meeting questionnaire should be circulated to gather further feedback.

12. Dates of summer term all-governor meetings and events

14 May – Strategy Session
9 July – Corporation Board

Approved as a correct record by the Corporation on 9 July 2025