

MEETING OF THE CORPORATION BOARD

MINUTES

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

Date	Wednesday 15 October 2025
Time	17:00 to 19:12
Location	The Immersive Suite, Barnes Wallis Building, Weybridge
Present (Governors):	Professor Craig Mahoney (Chair) Fiona Capstick Lee Chantry (Staff Governor) Adam Herriott Mary Hughes Maureen McDermott (Staff Governor) Hilary Omissi Paul Stedman Christine Ricketts (Principal and Chief Executive) Meyrick Vevers
Officers and advisers In attendance	Sarah Clancey (Assistant Principal Education) - APE Allan Tyrer (Chief Operating Officer) - COO Melissa Drayson (Director of Governance) - DG Beth Pattison (Head of Safeguarding) – item 3
Observers	None present
Apologies for absence	Jesse Adekoya Dr Andrew Gilchrist James Measures Rebecca Page-Tickell Jackie Pearson
Quorum (6)	The meeting was quorate throughout

Item	Action lead
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Pre-Meeting tour

Governors were given a tour of the new Barnes-Wallis and Tower Building facilities and met one of the new Student Governors, Jennifer Kouroupis. A demonstration was given of the new Immersive Suite.

1. Preliminary items

1.1 Chair's Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed attendees.

Apologies for absence (listed above) were received.

The Chair updated governors on his activities since the previous meeting, including college business undertaken, external meetings attended and sector developments:

- A new FE Commissioner had been appointed to succeed Shelagh Le Grave. Ellen Thinnesen, the CEO of Education Partnership North East, would take up her role in January 2026.
- The Chair had been in regular contact with the FE Commissioner to chase ministerial sign-off of the FEC's recommendation from the SPA (Structure and Prospects Appraisal).
- The new Ofsted regime had been through a pilot phase and would be implemented in full in late 2025. Chairs who had been through the pilot had reported a mixed experience in their colleges. The new regime would have a sharper focus on governance and would require governors to demonstrate awareness of their impact and knowledge of the sector. Further information and training would be provided to governors on Ofsted at a future date.

1.2 Declarations of interest

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

Governors were reminded to complete and return their annual register of interests and declaration of eligibility to serve forms.

1.3 Urgent other business notified in advance.

No requests for urgent other business items had been received.

1.4 Requests to raise consent agenda items for discussion

Governors noted the introduction of the consent agenda. There had been no requests to raise consent agenda items, so they would be taken en bloc without discussion.

1.5 Ratification of the appointment of student governors

Following an invitation for nominations, two students had been put forward for the two positions on the Corporation Board:

- Jennifer Kouroupis, Level 3 Travel and Tourism
- Jude Hayden, Level 2 Education and Early Years

The Corporation **ENDORSED** the appointment of the Student Governors.

2. Minutes

2.1 Minutes of previous meetings

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the minutes of 9 July 2025 be **APPROVED** as an accurate record, and confidential sections be confirmed.
- (ii) That the minutes of the Special Corporation meeting on 1 October 2025 be **APPROVED**. The confidential status of these minutes would be reviewed once the outcome of the SPA was in the public domain.

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. The difficulties with providing governors with external access to the Virtual College online training platform had yet to be resolved.

3. Safeguarding Annual Report 2024-25

Supporting paper and presentation by the Head of Safeguarding

The Corporation Board welcomed the new Head of Safeguarding and discussed the following headlines from the written reports:

- There had been a continuous increase in safeguarding and well-being referrals, with 580 unique learners receiving support. Governors asked whether this should be viewed as positive or negative. Whilst the increase reflected the national picture in terms of higher rates of mental poor health, it could also be attributed to the greater visibility of the safeguarding team and use of the online referrals system, My Concern.
- Governors noted the rate of students thinking, threatening or attempting suicide and asked that numbers be broken down by category in future reports. (ACTION)
- Governors expressed concern about the workload implications for the safeguarding team. The importance of maintaining the frequency of team meetings and other staff support, such as the opportunity to take 'time-out' was noted. A college-to-college peer support initiative was being developed through SurreyFE.
- Governors discussed some incidents involving students that had occurred at the start of the term. Although these had occurred outside the college campus, the College recognised its duty of care and had introduced a greater security presence and CCTV in the woodlands.
- To ensure that students felt safe on campus, a visible police presence had been introduced through a 'Meet the Beat'

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initiative. Random bag searches had also been introduced, which had so far resulted in nothing of concern being found.

The increased safeguarding challenges in both Further Education and Higher Education were recognised.

The Head of Safeguarding was commended for a clear and informative presentation, especially as this related to the year before she started in post.

4. **Principal and Chief Executive's Report, including 2024-25 performance against KPIs**

Supporting paper and presentation by the Principal and CEO

The main report and KPI dashboard were taken as read. Key headlines were:

- Student enrolment was strong, with current numbers suggesting growth of 3%. This placed the college in a strong position to hit its forecast target of £20m income by 2028-29.
- A target had been set to recruit 101 new apprentices in 101 days. The college would be launching new Foundation Apprenticeships in January, which would include upskilling opportunities for staff.

Key priority areas for this academic year were:

- **Learner excellence**, including developing student voice and student support.
- **Empowering People**. Three Directors would be undertaking Aspiring Leader training. Around a third of teaching staff had joined from industry, which was positive for the learner experience. However, many of these staff members required teacher training to ensure that they were fully effective.
- **Future Ready College**. Focusing on the estate redevelopment, growth and targeted investment.

There was a discussion of the need to ensure that options for investing some of the cash generated through achieving a high EBITDA be fully evaluated in terms of future financial impact.

Governors were reminded that the current Strategic Plan would be ending in 2026. The February Strategy Day would be a timely opportunity for governors and managers to come together to reflect and consider the College's strategic ambitions, and the challenges and risks it might face in its drive for growth and learner excellence.

It was agreed that it would be important to reassess financial targets and policies as part of the strategy day, including the College's reserves and debt repayment policies.

Whilst there was much cause for optimism, governors recognised that there were areas for improvement, and it was important not to lose sight of them.

- There were questions about the challenges in T Level recruitment. It was explained that the College had recruited well in areas where other colleges hadn't and vice versa.
- The College was providing more Level 2 occupational entry opportunities to students who wanted a qualification to get them into work. Interest in these courses had been high.
- The College had achieved a small increase in English and maths outcomes, but the number of students achieving Grade 4 or better had decreased. A number of students remained static despite multiple resits and were increasingly demoralised. The number of students who had enrolled without an English or maths GCSE had increased significantly and was higher than the sector average. Staff resources and expertise had been increased to focus on one-to-one support and address attendance issues.
- The view was expressed that maths and English GCSE did not provide the practical skills needed for the workplace and that this should be the subject of sector-wide lobbying.

To enable them to better understand the student experience with regard to maths and English, governors expressed an interest in having the opportunity to sit either a GCSE maths or English paper.

AGREED: To provide an opportunity for governors to sit a maths or English GCSE paper. Dir Gov

5. Accommodating Growth in the Construction Curriculum
Supporting paper by the Chief Operating Officer

The Corporation Board considered a paper that had been produced following initial discussion at the Finance and Resources Committee regarding options for accommodating future growth in Construction.

[Redacted]

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the proposal that Option 5 should be explored further be **APPROVED**.
- (ii) That a fully costed feasibility analysis and proposal be brought to the Corporation on 17 December.
- (iii) That costings be discussed with the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee before the next Corporation meeting.

COO/
Fusion

6. Finance and Resources
Headline report and recommendations from the F&R Committee meeting on 8 October 2025, presented by the F&R Chair

The Corporation noted the Committee summary report. The Committee Chair highlighted the following:

- The July Management Accounts (included in the Corporation papers) had been reviewed in depth. There had been significant
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savings on agency staff and recruitment fees, contributing to the strong year-end performance.

- There had been a good discussion of staff turnover and retention, exploring the improved rates, along with the reasons for pockets where turnover was higher. The benefits of employing teachers from industry were recognised, although the transition to teaching for some was more challenging.
- Recent staff surveys showed more positive outcomes across all areas of questioning.
- A job evaluation and pay review process was currently underway. Outcomes would lead into the strategic discussions commencing in the New Year.
- The Weybridge estate redevelopment project continued to proceed on time and within budget. The tender for the construction of the new Vickers building was currently in progress. The Project Managers had given assurance that any increased inflationary costs could be covered by the contingency and underspend on other elements of the project. There would be no compromise on the standard of the build as it was important that SEND provision was properly catered for.

In response to a question, management confirmed that the AoC (Association of Colleges) had recommended a 4% staff pay award for 2025-26, although it was acknowledged that many colleges would find this unaffordable for the whole year. The College had allocated 3% in the budget, and this would be reviewed in light of the AoC recommendation.

RESOLVED: that a final proposal on a staff pay award for 2025-26 P&CEO would be brought to the December Corporation meeting

7. Audit and Risk

7.1 Audit and Risk Committee report and recommendations

Supporting paper and Minutes of the meeting on 1 October 2025, presented by the Director of Governance

The summary Committee report and recommendations were noted. In light of its strategic importance, assurance was sought that the recommendations from the English and maths/attendance audit had been accepted and would be monitored closely. Progress would be reported to both the Audit and Risk and the Teaching and Learning Committees.

The updated risk register (included in the Corporation papers) had been discussed in full, and headlines noted:

- The largest capital project risks were the cost of the new Vickers, yet to be secured, and any project overruns.
- Curriculum and quality continue to hold significant risks, particularly in terms of pockets of poor attendance and specific concerns about maths and English. A separate risk has been added relating to these areas
- Some inherent high-risk areas/activities remain, e.g. capital project outcome, safeguarding and safety and potential for

cyber-attack, although it is considered that strong mitigations are in place against those risks materialising

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Internal Audit Plan for 2025-26 be **APPROVED**
- (ii) That the Risk Management Strategy 2025-26 be **APPROVED**.
- (iii) That the risk register be **ENDORSED** as a fair reflection of current strategic risk

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS (taken en bloc)

8. The College Seal Register was NOTED

9. The following policies and procedures were APPROVED

- The Safeguarding Policy 2025-26
- Staff Grievance Procedures (via F&R Committee recommendation)
- Staff Continuing Professional Development Policy (via F&R Committee recommendation)

10. Evaluation of the meeting

Governors were asked if papers and presentations met their needs in terms of providing information to perform their role and gain assurance. Feedback was that the executive summaries had been of a high standard and the length of the main meeting pack had been appropriate.

All present confirmed that they had felt able to contribute questions and views.

The Board asked for its positive feedback to be conveyed to the new Head of Safeguarding on her concise and well-informed presentation.

11. Dates of future meetings

17 December: Corporation Board
4 February: Strategy Session
18 March: Corporation Board
13 May: Strategy Session
1 July: Corporation Board

Approved as a correct record by the Corporation on 17 December 2025