BROOKLANDS TECHNICAL COLLEGE

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 17 December 2025**
Time	17:00 to 19:12
Location	Ashford Campus
Present (Governors):	Professor Craig Mahoney (Chair) Fiona Capstick Dr Andrew Gilchrist Jude Hayden (Student Governor) Adam Herriott Mary Hughes Maureen McDermott (Staff Governor) Hilary Omissi Jackie Pearson 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
Observers	None present
Apologies for absence	Jesse Adekoya Lee Chantry (Staff Governor) Jennifer Kouroupis (Student Governor) James Measures Rebecca Page-Tickell
Quorum (6)	The meeting was quorate throughout

Item		**Action lead**
1.	**Preliminary items**	
1.1	**Chair's Welcome and Apologies for Absence**	
	Apologies for absence (listed above) were received.	

The Chair commented that it had been a momentous term, with standalone status being approved and the FE Commissioner's recommendation that intervention should be lifted. Final approval that the College would be put into PIMS (post-intervention monitoring support) should now be received in January.

Jude Hayden was welcomed to his first meeting as student governor.

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 for urgent other business items had been received.

1.4 Requests to raise consent agenda items for discussion

There were no requests to raise consent agenda items for discussion, so they would be taken en bloc without discussion.

2. Minutes

2.1 Minutes of previous meetings

RESOLVED:

(i) That the minutes of 15 October 2025 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. It was agreed that the action from July 2025 to provide governors with access to the Virtual College online training platform should be removed from the schedule, as other sources of training would be provided as required.

It was noted that the action to bring a detailed paper on Construction curriculum accommodation would now be postponed to January.

2.3 Written resolutions
Supporting paper by the Director of Governance

The Corporation noted for the Minutes that the following resolution had been passed in writing by a majority of governors on 19 November:

RESOLVED: That the Corporation approve the Deed of Variation of the s106 agreement and authorise that it be executed by the application of the College Seal.

3. Governor engagement feedback

3.1 Student Governors and Learner Voice

Presentation by the Student Governor

Governors received a presentation of feedback provided at the Student Council meeting held earlier in December, plus some reflections on the student governors' first term in the role, including external training events attended.

The meeting had been well attended by student representatives, as well as the Vice Chair of the Corporation. Several positive aspects of the student experience during Term 1 had been highlighted. Key successes include well-paced teaching and helpful feedback in departments like Early Years and Sport, a strong sense of belonging across most college areas, and clear expectations regarding work experience. Additionally, students expressed appreciation for the integration of digital tools such as Google Classroom and Canva to support their learning.

Areas for improvement included inconsistencies in teaching pace in some subjects, teaching staff absence, unclear marking criteria in some departments, and Wi-Fi dropouts in some areas. Students had suggested a range of actions and timelines to address these by the end of Term 2.

The Student Governors reported favourably on the support and development opportunities provided to them in their first term, including a 'Changemaker' event run by Unloc aimed at building skills in public speaking and formal decision-making. The Student Governors noted the impact of this training and their commitment to working collaboratively with staff and governors to drive improvements for all learners.

Governors raised questions for management on some of the areas of improvement. It was confirmed that, where inconsistent practice had occurred, this was mainly related to the level of teaching experience among newer staff who had been recruited from industry. Targeted induction, ongoing CPD and other support had been strengthened to develop the required practice. It was noted that governors would have the opportunity to assess progress at the Teaching and Learning Day on 11 March.

It was also confirmed that the IT Team were in the process of resolving issues with Wi-Fi dropouts.

The Student Governor was congratulated on a clear, thorough and confident presentation.

All governors were encouraged to attend the Student Conference on the afternoon of 18th March, before the Corporation Board meeting on the same day.

3.2 Engagement and training undertaken by other governors

Governors were invited to give a brief verbal report on any activities undertaken since the previous meeting.

- Jackie Pearson commented on the excellent Self-Assessment Report (SAR) validation meeting attended on 26 November. The document was the best she had seen, and the discussion had been very productive.
- Several governors had attended the opening of the new training restaurant and commented on the state-of-the-art facilities and the quality of food and service from the students.
- Jackie Pearson had attended a Careers and Personal Development meeting as link governor, where evidence of the impact of new initiatives had been presented.
- Hilary Omissi had found visits to other colleges as part of the SPA process to be very informative.
- Hilary Omissi commented that the English and maths curriculum business review had been encouraging.
- Mary Hughes reported on the SEND business review. A key issue was the response to the challenges faced by students moving from SEND specialist provision into the main college. A key challenge was to maintain consistency in structure and support across curriculum areas, and to provide staff training as necessary.
- Fiona Capstick and Craig Mahoney had attended an enjoyable and informative Leadership Panel the previous day, with a Q&A with middle and senior leaders.
- Fiona Capstick had engaged students, via the IT department, in creating a brochure for a charity fundraiser as part of their work experience.

Following the discussion at the previous Corporation meeting, the Director of Governance issued GCSE maths and English papers to governors who wished to sit them under exam conditions.

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 was taken as read, and a presentation was provided to prompt discussion. Topics covered:

- Strategic independence and investment in new posts
- Sustained quality and improvement, including the outcomes of the 2024-25 Self-Assessment
- External influence and partnerships, including regional leadership roles held by the Principal and CEO, the development of the Surrey Post-16 alliance; a successful bid by SurreyFE for construction investment funds, and partnership work on community safety and mental health.

Governors commented on the plan to invest in digital and teaching through the creation of three new posts. In response to questions, it was confirmed that this should provide sufficient capacity and expertise to support teaching staff across all areas of the curriculum, and to increase the College's responsiveness to new digital developments. Governors asked if the recent positive developments at BTC had had an impact on staff recruitment. It was reported that interest in the

Deputy Principal role had been very strong. Construction, and English and maths remained hard-to-recruit areas.

The SAR (self-assessment report) validation panel had had robust discussions about lifting the grading for Skills from reasonable to strong and had concluded that the evidence supported this decision.

English and maths remained a critical priority for 2025-26, and a separate Quality Improvement Plan had been introduced to ensure changes were implemented at pace. Governors asked about the expected impact in 2025-26 and were advised that, given the profile of the College's learners, it would be difficult to achieve the National Rate. A target had been set, however, for all learners resitting English or maths to improve by at least one grade.

T Level quality would be an additional focus. The T Level awarding bodies had been approached to provide technical advice to T Level teachers as the specification was very different from BTECs.

It was noted that, while staff retention had improved, this was still considered too high by the FE Commissioner team. Although there were no reliable comparators for the sector, the action to monitor and reduce turnover further was noted and accepted as part of the forthcoming Post Intervention (PIMS) Action Plan.

The proposal to create a Surrey Post 16 Education and Skills Alliance, independent from Surrey County Council, was welcomed. It was confirmed that this would involve Sixth Form Colleges but not schools.

A positive outcome from student incidents in the woods was a stronger collaborative relationship with the community police and Heathside school to identify perpetrators. Mandatory training had been provided by the police for the young people who had witnessed and filmed the incident to educate them that, as bystanders, they had colluded with it. In response to a question.

Further questions were raised by governors about the introduction of V Levels and where these would sit in relation to other qualifications. It was noted that they might be attractive for Sixth Form Colleges as well as General FE Colleges, as they could be mixed with A Levels. The potential for greater confusion among young people and parents was flagged.

Governors expressed curiosity about the potential for AI to support English and maths and other learning. The student governor stated that he used Gemini to check his draft assignments against assessment criteria before submitting them to teachers, and that Canva was a useful tool to produce mind maps. It was agreed that it would be useful to revisit the topic at a future Strategy Day.

RESOLVED:

i. **That the KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) for 2025/26 be APPROVED.**

ii. **That the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) judgements 2024/25 be APPROVED, including Good for Overall Effectiveness and Strong for meeting local skills needs.**

AGREED: Future focus on the use of AI at a governors' Strategy Day.

5. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report and Priorities for 25-26

Supporting paper presented by the Director of Governance

The Corporation Board noted that the draft report had been discussed in depth at the Teaching and Learning Committee. Key themes had also been reflected in the Self-Assessment process, and priorities would be incorporated into the College Improvement Plan. The proposed priorities for 2025-26 were noted and supported.

RESOLVED: that the EDI Annual Report 2024-25 be APPROVED.

6. Curriculum and Quality
Teaching and Learning Committee report

Supporting paper presented by the Chair of the T&L Committee

The summary of the meeting was taken as read, and the following was highlighted.

- An informative presentation from the Faculty Director and Programme Manager about Engineering
- Improvements in Apprenticeship achievement and growth in numbers were heartening to see in the light of the subcontracting legacy.
- A significant focus on English and maths GCSE. The college now has over 1000 students who lack one or both qualifications, which translates into significant day-to-day pressure on staff. The impact on the budget of such a high number of exam entries was also noted.
- A presentation was provided by the Personal Development and Careers team, demonstrating that their work was beginning to have an impact on student attitudes and behaviours.

7. Annual Report and Financial Statements 2024-25

Supporting papers presented by the Chair of the Joint meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee and Finance and Resources Committee

7.1 External Audit Management Letter, and letters of representation

The final letter of the Financial Statements and Regularity Auditors was received. It was confirmed that there had been no changes to the report delivered to the joint meeting of the Audit and Risk and Finance and Resources Committees, or the conclusions and opinions of the auditors contained therein. All outstanding actions to date had been completed.

The Corporation noted that the audit process had run smoothly and had not resulted in any material adjustments, identified any control weaknesses or other concerns. An unqualified opinion had, therefore, been provided for both financial statements and regularity.

RESOLVED:

i) That the Financial Statements and Regularity Audit Management Letter be APPROVED.

ii) **That the Letter of Representation be APPROVED and signed by the Chair.**

7.2 Audit Committee Annual Report

The College was required to submit the Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report with the approved Annual Report and Financial Statements. The Corporation noted that the report gave a comprehensive account of the Committee's activity during the year and the opinion that, based on this activity, the College had adequate systems of internal control, risk management and corporate governance.

RESOLVED: that the Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report 2024-25 be APPROVED.

7.3 Annual Report and Financial Statements

The draft document was reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee and Finance and Resources Committee on 3 December. Some changes had been made subsequently, but these were presentational and did not affect the bottom line. Key headlines were:

- Income for the year increased, and the college recorded an operating surplus for the year of £1,554,000, nearly £1m higher than the previous year.
- The College had made purchases of non-current assets during the year of £14,319,000m, most of which related to the redevelopment of the Weybridge estate.
- At 31 July 2025, the College had reserves of over £50m and cash balances of £13.5m.
- Solvency ratios were very strong, and all FE Commissioner financial benchmarks were met. The DfE's Financial Health tool calculated a score which was just short of outstanding.

Governors were signposted to the full 2024-25 financial record, which would also be submitted to the Department for Education at the same time as the Financial Statements.

A governor raised the point that it was difficult to track the flow of capital spending through the Annual report and Financial Statements, and was advised that this was reported throughout the year through the management accounts. The Chief Operating Officer was, however, asked to provide a one-page, easy-to-read summary for the next Corporation meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report and Financial Statements 2024-25 be APPROVED, signed and submitted to the Department for Education by the 31 December deadline.

ACTION: That governors would be provided with a one-page summary of capital income and expenditure at the March meeting. **COO**

7.4 Financial Statements and Regularity Auditors' letter of engagement

Governors were asked to approve the Letter as part of the mandatory requirement to renew it every three years.

RESOLVED: That the Letter of Engagement with Buzzacott LLP be APPROVED.

8. Finance and Resources

Headline report and recommendations from the F&R Committee meeting on 3 December 2025, presented by the F&R Chair

The written summary of the meeting was taken as read, and the Committee Chair highlighted the following:

- The Committee supported the recommendation to implement a 4% staff pay award from January 2026. It was noted that the original budget was for 3% from September. The revised proposal for 4% reflected the AoC (Association of Colleges) recommendation and was in line with other local colleges.
- The Committee had discussed the impact of pay on staff retention and would continue to monitor this metric.
- The October Management Accounts demonstrated that the College was in line with budget in terms of income, pay and non-pay expenditure, and forecast year-end EBITDA.
- Full consideration of proposals for future accommodation of growth in Construction learners would now be given at a Special F&R Committee meeting in January.

The Chief Operating Officer was invited to give a brief update on any developments with the Estates Redevelopment Project since the F&R Committee meeting. It was reported that the final building control sign-off for Barnes Wallis and the Tower had been received earlier that day. Although some minor snagging issues were still anticipated, Phase 1 had come in on time and within the original budget. Any underspend would be carried over to Phase 2. The Project Managers, Fusion, were in the middle of the tender process for the new Vickers building, with proposals due on 23 January with an estimated completion date of Spring 2027. Fusion had re-costed the new Vickers build and confirmed it was still within budget. It was agreed to be important to avoid any value-engineering of either Vickers or final landscaping.

The Community Hub and Sports Hall were on track to be completed in late 2026, at which point the College might lose the use of the Wellington Building for construction, hence the need to research alternative facilities.

RESOLVED: That the staff pay award of 4% from January 2026 be APPROVED.

9. Audit and Risk

9.1 Audit and Risk Committee report and recommendations

Supporting paper and Minutes of the meeting on 3 December 2025

The written summary of the meeting was taken as read, and the Chair highlighted the following:

- The annual Value for Money report had indicated that procurement processes and financial controls were robust. It was agreed that future reports would cross-reference with other college KPIS, such as class size, staff utilisation and room usage.
- The termly report on Freedom of Information Act requests had indicated that there had been a high volume of request, but all had been commercial or blanket requests to all colleges.
- The risk register would come for termly review at the February 2026 meeting

10. Governance and compliance

Governance, Nominations and Remuneration Committee report (non-confidential)

Supporting paper presented by the G&N Committee Chair

The written summary of the meeting was taken as read, and the Chair highlighted the following:

A governor recruitment campaign would be launched after Christmas to fill existing vacancies and plan for the departures of Jackie Pearson, Paul Stedman, and Mary Hughes in July 2026.

As part of the annual governance self-assessment, a review of BTC governance against the reports into Weston College and other recent colleges where there had been failures in governance had been undertaken. The review had indicated no areas of concern, but had identified that more work was needed to establish how governors might gain assurance over the accuracy of the data presented to them.

The governance self-assessment for 2024-25 had demonstrated improvements across all areas of governance. Survey outcomes were particularly strong, with all questions scoring better than in previous years. Areas of strength identified by governors included:

Governors cited a number of strengths in their responses:

- The strength of the governance/exec team, based on trust and a sense of 'togetherness' and unity, coupled with strong scrutiny and challenge
- Diverse, experienced and committed board membership
- Strong leadership from the Chair encouraging open and honest communication.
- Resilience in addressing the challenges of recent years.

Areas for development during 2025-26 included:

- Understanding and addressing the drop in attendance at meetings, particularly the Corporation Board
- Develop further student-facing opportunities for governors.
- Relaunch the College sustainability strategy
- Ensure governor participation in the new College strategic plan and review the governance structure.
- Renew the governor skills audit approach.

Governors noted the proposed modifications to the Instrument and Articles of Government, which reflected DfE (Department for Education) guidance on the voting rights of Student Governors under the age of 18, and the removal of the reference to the Secretary of State as the appointing authority if numbers fall below the quorum.

RESOLVED:

(i) That Fiona Capstick be appointed Teaching and Learning Committee Chair with effect from 1 January 2026.
(ii) That Rick Parish's term of office as a Co-opted member of the Audit and Risk Committee be extended until a replacement is found.
(iii) That the Governance self-assessment conclusions be endorsed and a grade of 'Good' for governance 2024-25 be APPROVED.
(iv) That the updated Instrument and Articles of Government be APPROVED.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS (taken en bloc)

11. The following policies, procedures and plans were APPROVED

i. Fees Policy (via F&R Committee)
ii. Treasury Management Policy (via F&R Committee)
iii. Positive Behaviour and Support Policy (via T&L Committee)
iv. Updated Complaints Policy (via T&L Committee)
v. College Calendar 2026-27

12. Evaluation of the meeting

Governors confirmed that papers and presentations had been of a high standard and provided sufficient information to enable them to perform their role and gain assurance.

13. Dates of future meetings

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

Staff and Student Governors and staff in attendance, including the Principal and Chief Executive, withdrew from the meeting for the report of the GNR Committee (senior postholder remuneration items). Discussions are recorded within a separate confidential minute.

Approved as a correct record by the Corporation on 18 March 2026