MEETING OF THE CORPORATION BOARD

MINUTES

Some minutes had been redacted from the published version on the grounds of commercial or personal confidentiality.

Date	**Wednesday 18 March 2026**
Time	17:00 to 19:35
Location	Immersive Suite, Barnes Wallis, Weybridge Campus
Present (Governors):	Professor Craig Mahoney (Chair) Fiona Capstick Jude Hayden (Student Governor) 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 (Vice Principal Lorne Richardson (Vice Principal Allan Tyrer (Chief Operating Officer) - COO Melissa Drayson (Director of Governance) - DG Beth Pattison (Head of Safeguarding) – item 5 only
Observers	None present
Apologies for absence	Jesse Adekoya Lee Chantry (Staff Governor) Andrew Gilchrist Adam Herriott Jennifer Kouroupis (Student Governor) Maureen McDermott (Staff Governor) James Measures Rebecca Page-Tickell
Quorum (7)	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 highlighted that there was a significant amount of new government policy that was impacting on FE.

1.2 Declarations of interest

There were no new declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda. Staff and students in attendance would be required to leave for the part 2 confidential item.

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 17 December 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.

Item 2.2: (Construction curriculum paper) was covered under Item 4.2

Item 7.3 (Capital I&E report) the report would now be a standing item within the Management Accounts. The January accounts had been scrutinised at Finance and Resources Committee and were provided via hyperlink for information. There was a discussion about putting the management accounts in the main pack although this would increase the length. After discussion it was agreed that all monthly management accounts would be sent to all governors electronically with an invitation to raise questions with the Chief Operating Officer.

AGREED: That a schedule for the sharing of monthly management accounts via BoardEffect would be developed.	**DG/ COO**

2.3 Written resolutions

Supporting paper by the Director of Governance

The Corporation noted for the Minutes that a confidential written resolution had been approved by independent governors only on 27 January 2026 to appoint

Christina Hart to the post of Deputy Principal at the proposed salary level, and to designate this as a senior postholder position.

3. Governor engagement feedback

3.1 Student Governors and Learner Voice

Presentation by the Student Governor and independent governors on activities undertaken since the previous meeting

Student Governors and Student Conference 18 March

The annual student conference had been co- facilitated by Jude Hayden, student governor and attended by Fiona Capstick, Jackie Pearson, Craig Mahoney and Christine Ricketts.

The student governor commented that the first half had been well attended, and was very interactive, with feedback provided in real time via the Padlet app. Some thoughtful questions had been posed to the panel of senior managers and governors. Fiona Capstick had been a panellist and commented that it had been a highly enjoyable and thought-provoking event. It was suggested that for future events, a time should be selected that encouraged more students to stay to the end.

Teaching and Learning Day 11 March

Attended by Paul Stedman, Jackie Pearson, Hilary Omissi and Fiona Capstick.

Feedback from the governor lessons observation undertaken included:

- Overall student enjoyment was high, particularly within the Engineering department.
- Governors observed a wide spread of teaching skills with some excellent practice and some inconsistencies. There had also been some inconsistencies in the management of late-coming students.
- Some of the groups observed had been small, which had pointed to a need to include larger classes in the mix.
- The impact of staff absence on the student experience was identified as an area for further inquiry
- Governors benefited from a demonstration of the implementation of the new Teaching and Learning strategy, and areas where intervention and support were having an impact with the goal to move all teaching staff to 'leading teacher' status.

The general consensus was that the day was highly valued as means to gain insight into teaching and learning; it was recommended that all governors participate in opportunities to gain essential context before formal meetings. Observing the student experience first hand is vital to governors' fulfilling their broader responsibilities and making board-level decisions 'real'.

The Chair reported that he was in the process of developing a 'governor compact' to clearly define the expectations of all governors in terms of attendance and engagement. The aim was to include parameters to ensure the boundary between governance and management remained clear. A recommendation would be that all governor visits would be arranged via the Director of Governance.

AGREED: That the draft Governor Compact would be brought to the GNR Committee for discussion in May.

STRATEGIC DISCUSSION ITEMS

4.1 Principal and Chief Executive's Report, including 2024-25 performance against KPIs

Supporting paper and presentation by the Principal and CEO

a. College performance, regional and national policy

The Corporation Board noted the following key highlights from the Principal and CEO's report, and the KPI dashboard:

- The most significant development this term was the official notification that the Department of Education (DfE) had moved BTC out of formal intervention and into Post-Intervention Monitoring Support (PIMS). The PIMS process was scheduled for completion in 9-12 months. Progress against the PIMS action plan would be reported to governors at each Committee and Corporation meeting as appropriate.
- The College was making steady progress against the 2025/26 College Improvement Plan (CIP). Learner retention remained exceptionally strong at 97.2%. While forecast 16-19 achievement was currently conservative at 80.3% (against an 85% KPI), this was in line with the previous year and was expected to improve. Apprenticeship timely achievement was forecast to improve +15.5 percentage points.
- The latest staff pulse survey showed a "proud to work here" rating of 97% with 92% of staff feeling well-informed about College activities. These were significant improvements on the same point the previous year.
- On-site works for the current capital project were scheduled for April.
- The total staff turnover rate to date was 9.15% against a full year target within the PIMS action plan of under 25%, and under 30% for those in their first year of employment.
- The College continued to strengthen its role as a regional anchor institution as part of SurreyFE, a member of the Surrey Strategic Post 16 alliance, and a 'spoke' for the South East Construction Technical Excellence College (SECTEC). The P&CEO also inputted to the Government's national review of NEETs, recognising BTC's proactive success with these young people. The college had contributed to the updated Local Skills Improvement Plan which was due to be published in April.
- The DfE published the Schools White Paper in February 2026, Every Child Achieving and Thriving. This set out the vision to improve the lives of all children and young people and the education policy to underpin this over the next decade. The ultimate ambition is to strengthen inclusion and tackle inequality from early years to adulthood, by building a system that supports every child and young person to achieve academically and thrive. Whilst welcoming the intention behind the White Paper, governors raised concerns regarding funding and staffing, particularly for SEND and specialist services like Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT), which risked being spread too thin.

The Corporation Board reviewed the Further Education Commissioner (FEC) letter, focusing on strengthening governance oversight and accountability.

Further guidance was expected regarding the expected Board Assurance Frameworks (BAFs).

A discussion was held on whether current committee structures and the Risk Register were sufficient to meet new accountability expectations. Governors emphasised the importance of utilising the college dashboard to ensure they receive clear, unmasked information for effective checking and challenge. It was **agreed** that board assurance should be a topic for a forthcoming strategic session

Curriculum reform and developments were noted and discussed, with the introduction of the first tranche of V Levels in 2027. Whilst these would allow learners flexibility in terms of studying a mix of Level 3 qualification, there was a risk of greater competition with local schools if Sixth Forms adopted V Levels as expected. Governors expressed concern that the curriculum changes would stretch limited college resources further, with a detrimental impact on staff. Managers gave assurance that the college was advanced in its curriculum planning and was managing well within existing capacity.

There was a new requirement on colleges to submit a Strategic Transition Planning Statement by 30 June 2026, outlining curriculum delivery intentions for 2027-28. This would be brought to the Teaching and Learning Committee in June.

b. Strategic Plan Development

Following the Strategy Day in February, four pillars of the new strategic plan had been drafted for further discussion and Corporation Board approval. It was confirmed that the Strategic Plan would be underpinned by an unpublished internal implementation plan. It was acknowledged that the document was work in progress at present and further thought was needed on how to present some of the 'bedrock' intentions, such as financial sustainability. Further work was also required to clearly differentiate pillars 3 and 4.

Members of the executive group presented more detail on each pillar for consideration.

1. Learner Voice and Pedagogical Excellence
2. Responsive Curriculum
3. Stakeholder & Community Engagement
4. Growth & Reputation

- [Redacted discussion]

Governors confirmed their broad endorsement of the four pillars, commenting that they were a good distillation of the strategy day discussions.

The Director of Governance advised that a mapping exercise of current committee scope against the strategic implementation plan would be undertaken to ensure adequate governance oversight and assurance.

RESOLVED: That, pending development, the Board endorsed the four pillars of the new Strategic Plan

AGREED:

(i) **That, following further work and stakeholder consultation, the draft plan would be brought to the Strategy Session on 13 May for discussion.** **CR**

(ii) **That a review of governance structures would be undertaken to ensure close alignment to the new strategic plan** **MD**

(iii) **That the Strategic Transition Planning Statement would be brought to the Teaching and Learning Committee for approval in June.** **CR/ LR**

4.2 Options for construction (Hawker/Ashford extensions)

Supporting paper and presentation by the VP Curriculum

[Redacted Minute]

RESOLVED:

(i) **That the two proposals presented for Construction accommodation be ENDORSED**

(ii) **That the proposal to bid for Construction Skills Capacity Funding and Post 16 Capacity Funding be APPROVED**

(iii) **That authority be delegated to the Executive Group to finalise and submit the bids by the 17 April deadline.**

5. Safeguarding mid-year report

Supporting paper and presentation by the Head of Safeguarding

Due to confidential issues, the report was discussed without student governors present.

Key headlines from the report were:

- The number of students being supported by the Safeguarding and Wellbeing Team was significantly higher than the previous year. In response to governors' questions, it was reported that this reflected a similar picture across the sector and was partly due to increased awareness of the support available, and staff training.
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted}
- [Redacted]
- {Redacted}
- Staffing continued to be a challenge. A positive step had, however, been to locate a permanent member of the safeguarding team at Ashford.
- Staff training on consent had been provided to improve staff discussions on the topic with learners.

Governors sought greater understanding of why online abuse was rising. It was becoming increasingly difficult for staff to keep up with new apps and technology available to young people. More education was being provided to inform learners about the consequences of their actions, and the law in this area.

Governors asked about the impact of the drive to strengthen the safeguarding culture at the college. The team were seeing greater engagement by staff, with more visits to the office and an increase in the use of MyConcern to report concerns. Ultimately, the goal was to train more staff to become DSLs. There was strong collaboration between the safeguarding team and leadership team to strengthen the culture and provide a wraparound service to learners.

Governors also explored the potential that curriculum staff might become overwhelmed with the increase in issues among their learners. Management advised that the picture was mixed. Some experienced teachers were very good at dealing with such issues, whereas some newer teachers needed extra support. It was noted that the Schools White Paper indicated there would be investment to help teachers deal with issues facing young people.

The Head of Safeguarding was thanked for a detailed and informative report.

6. Curriculum and Quality of the Learner Experience

Report and recommendations of the Teaching and Learning Committee on 11 March 2026, presented by the Committee Chair

The written summary of the meeting was taken as read, and it was noted that many of the issues discussed had been covered by other items on the Corporation agenda.

In addition, the Committee had received a deep dive report on Digital T Levels and observed the excellent retention rate and progress of learners into employment or University. There had also been a focus on the implementation and impact of the English and Maths strategy with a slight closing of the attendance gap but work to do to achieve the target.

The Marketing and Recruitment report had indicated that applications are up on same time last year, with some subjects that had been areas of risk last year now providing to be popular, due to the introduction of new occupational Level 2 courses. School partnerships had also been strengthened.

It was noted that the new College website was going live in the summer, and that governors had requested a demonstration at the next meeting.

8. Finance and Resources

Report and recommendations from the F&R Committee meeting on 4 March 2026 presented by the Committee Chair

The Committee Chair presented the report and recommendations from the meeting held on 4 March. Key highlights included:

- An excellent People Report had provided assurance regarding the detailed review of staff pay. In addition, the staff turnover rate has decreased, but would continue to be monitored closely to ensure that the College was meeting the target in the PIMS action plan

- A proactive and rigorous approach to health and safety is being maintained. The Board noted the departure of the health and safety manager, with the recruitment process for a replacement currently underway.

- The January Management Accounts showed EBITDA was slightly under forecast, though there was confidence this would recover by year-end. Income remained on track with visible growth.

- The Committee had a rigorous discussion of strategic resource allocation, particularly on new staff positions to support the learner journey, and the impact on financial health: This investment was projected to reduce EBITDA to 9%. The Board noted that falling below this 9% threshold would begin to negatively impact on cash metrics. Further work was in progress to understand the impact of this shift on other financial KPIs

- The Estate Project progress report was noted with all elements of the plan on track. Following a robust tendering process, the Committee asked the Board to approve the appointment of Beard Construction to undertake the Vickers building project.

- Current spending of the College's own capital budget remained low, allowing for a carry-over to the next financial year. Underspent capital was earmarked for upgrades to curriculum resources and digital infrastructure.

RESOLVED:

(i) That Beard Construction be appointed as contractors for the Vickers project.

9. Audit and Risk

9.1 Audit and Risk Committee report and recommendations

Supporting paper and Minutes of the meeting on 26 February 2026, presented by the Director of Governance

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

- A Committee briefing by the internal auditors on the Economic Crime and Transparency Act (ECCTA) resulted in a range of internal actions, including an update to the College's Counter Fraud Strategy.

- Internal audit work completed on risk management and capital development had indicated reasonable assurance with a range of helpful actions to strengthen risk management processes. These would be considered in the light of the FE Commissioner message about the need for robust board assurance mechanisms.

- The February risk register had been considered. Most risks had shown improvement or stayed the same apart from English and Maths attendance.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS (taken en bloc)

10. The following items were APPROVED

i. Reserves Policy (via F&R Committee)

ii. Brooklands Enterprises Ltd (dormant subsidiary) accounts

11. Evaluation of the meeting

Governors confirmed that papers and presentations had generally been of a high standard and provided sufficient information to enable them to perform their role and gain assurance. Some topics could have been taken as read to free up more time to discuss the strategic plan, although it was accepted that it was difficult to balance strategic discussion and business within a Board meeting.

Governors asked for fewer acronyms within papers and presentations.

12. Dates of future meetings

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 confidential items relating to senior postholders and other individuals.

13. To be cut and pasted into separate minutes following approval

13 Part B items

The Part B Confidential Minutes of 17 December were APPROVED as an accurate record.

Confidential discussion is recorded in separate minutes

Approved as a correct record by the Corporation on 1 July 2026