BOARD/xx/26/x

DRAFT
PUBLIC MINUTES OF
THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS BUSINESS BOARD MEETING HELD ON
9 JULY 2026

Present:
Mr W Abbott (External Board Member/Board Chair)
Ms H Angus (External Board Member)
Mr D Barrett (External Board Member)
Mr M Burgess (Principal/CEO)
Mr T Burrell (External Board Member) (from item 60/26)
Ms S Dalby (Staff Member) (until item 69/26)
Mr A Dover (External Board Member)
Mr M Fabian (External Board Member)
Mr P Lachecki (External Board Member) (Vice-Chair)
Ms S Robertson (External Board Member)
Mr A Tomsa (External Board Member)
Mr M Williams (External Board Member)

Apologies:
Ms A Berry (External Board Member)
Mr R Cousins (Staff Member)
Mr R Gilpin (External Board Member)

In Attendance:
Mr A Bates - Chief Financial Officer (until item 70/26)
Ms J Matthews – Interim Head of Governance
Ms S Miles – Head of Governance designate
Dr K Morris – Vice-Principal, Curriculum and Quality (until item 70/26)
Ms H Snelling - Director of People, Facilities, and Infrastructure (until item 70/26)

Attendance: 80%

50/26 Private Business

None.

51/26 Apologies

As above.

The Chair thanked members for their attendance in person and welcomed Suzanna Miles, the Head of Governance designate, who would be taking up post after the summer.

52/26 Declarations of Interest

It was confirmed that the Register of Interests recorded all the current declarations of interests of those present.

53/26 Confidentiality of Items

As marked (C) for a period of two years. All the marked items were declared confidential on the grounds of commercial sensitivity.

54/26 Minutes of the Meetings of 26 March 2026 and 4 June 2026

The minutes of the meeting were approved as a true record.

55/26 Matters Arising from the Minutes and Actions Matrix (C)

Members were provided with an Actions Matrix and noted the status update of each item.

In relation to the staff survey, it was confirmed that there were no particular areas or strong themes in relation to the feedback on the physical environment.

56/26 Principal's Update (C)

MB provided an update on activities within the College and changes to the context in which it operates.

He reported that the College remains in a good place across all aspects: Curriculum, Staffing, Estates and Finance.

MB highlighted the recent interim report on NEETs which had been published, with the final report with proposed reforms due later in the year.

The Board noted that there had been a significant change in relation to HE sub-contracting requirements which would have implications for the College, and which would be overseen by the Audit Committee. The Board discussed the challenges and opportunities which might emerge as a result of the changes, noting that there would be a focus on growth opportunities at the strategy day in the autumn.

Members agreed that the College was in a good position and well prepared for future challenges.

RESOLVED: The Principal's Update was noted.

57/26 Student Progress Update (C)

KM presented the Student Progress Update highlighting the College was in a good position, with small pockets requiring further focus.

Members noted that following completion of self-assessment reports by curriculum areas, development of the College QIP was underway. Whilst no significant gaps were apparent, final results in the summer were still awaited.

The Board noted the update on the HE sub-contracting with LDT, with further information shared on the reasons for not progressing beyond the pilot year. MB

reported that the risks, including reputational, had been considered too high to continue the relationship.

Members discussed the exam invigilation arrangements, with KM reporting that it had been very challenging, with extensive access arrangements creating significant pressure on the teams. KM highlighted that the timeframes for preparing rooms for learners could be very tight, along with the number of rooms required presenting a further challenge. It was noted that increasing numbers of learners required access arrangements, sometimes complex, and that this was a trend that was likely to continue.

The Chair acknowledged the challenges facing the College, highlighting that the Board would be responsive to any additional resource required to support this.

RESOLVED: The Student Progress Update was noted.

58/26 People Update (C)

HS provided an update on progress against the People Operational Plan, as well highlighting key risks and challenges.

There were no concerns or emerging risks, with recruitment strong and only limited vacancies which were spread across the College rather than in one area. There were also no staffing shortages in relation to the Hardwick provision due to start in September 2026. HS reported that it was an encouraging position, and members congratulated the College on the success of the new strategies which had been introduced.

The Board discussed vacancy rates, noting that significant savings had been made in that area. HS and AB confirmed that vacancies were kept under constant review and the College now had improved systems for tracking vacancies.

Members noted the update on AI grievances, and the Chair acknowledged the work that was going into dealing with these.

RESOLVED: The People Update was noted.

59/26 Financial Matters: (C)

Management Accounts

AB presented the Management Accounts to May 2026.

RESOLVED: The Management Accounts were noted.

Financial Forecast Update including Approval of 3-Year Financial Plan (incorporating annual budget and pay award considerations prior to submission to ESFA 31 July) including Subsidiaries

AB presented the updated 3-Year Financial Plan for the College, highlighting that since preparation of the plan, there had been two major announcements which were only likely to improve the forecast position:

- the School Teachers' Pay Review Body had recommended a 3.5% pay award from September 2026, and 3% from September 2027 which was likely to influence the AoC recommendation on pay for 26/27. AB highlighted that the Board would formally consider the pay award for 26/27 in the Autumn once the AoC had made their recommendation.
- the Government had announced £485M for FE to help fund pay awards and address issues such as recruitment and retention issues. The allocation the College would receive from this would not be known in detail for some weeks.

RESOLVED: The Board:

- **Approved the College's financial position and revised forecast.**
- **Approved the projected financial health grades for the next three years.**

DfE Financial Benchmarking Report

Members received the DfE financial benchmarking report, noting the contents

RESOLVED: The Board noted the DfE financial benchmarking report.

60/26 Accountability agreement/meeting skills needs (C)

AB presented the accountability agreement which required approval by the Board, along with a position statement on meeting skills needs. Members noted that Ofsted had confirmed that the College was meeting local skills needs at the recent inspection.

Members noted that work was taking place to formalise the College's engagement with employers, and in forming employer forums, which would be formalised and recorded to demonstrate how their feedback linked to the curriculum. AB reported that employers were often more concerned with attributes than specific skills but Members noted that the College was restricted by the specifications within programmes of study. MB reported that there were a number of sources of evidence and feedback from employers, and it was confirmed that professional bodies were also consulted.

RESOLVED: The Board:

- **Approved the College's accountability agreement.**
- **Noted the position statement on meeting skills needs**

61/26 Estates Update

HS presented the estates update, reporting that planning permission had now been received for 125 Business Park. Progress on the Hardwick site was also on track.

RESOLVED: Members noted the Estates Update.

62/26 Audit and Compliance (C)

Health and Safety Update

Members reviewed the Health and Safety Update.

RESOLVED: The Health and Safety Update was noted.

Risk Management Update

Members reviewed the Risk Management Update and Principal Risk Register

RESOLVED: Members noted the changes to the Principal Risk Register.

Subcontracting Update

AB presented the latest College position on subcontracting.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Subcontracting Update, approving the College's current subcontracting arrangements for the 2025/26 academic year as per the confidential paper.

63/26 Approval of Policies

- **AI**
- **Financial Regulations**
- **Contracts of Employment**
- **Family Leave**
- **Grievance**
- **Hybrid working**
- **Inclusion**
- **Learner First Observation**
- **Reserves**
- **Safeguarding allegations against employees**
- **Student Funds**
- **Talkback**
- **Travel and Subsistence**
- **Tuition Fees**

Members reviewed the above policies.

RESOLVED: The policies were approved.

64/26 Committee, Subsidiary Company and Link Governor Reports (C)

Members had received minutes or reports from the following meetings:

- Audit – 10 June 2026
- C&Q – 11 June 2026
- GRS – 18 June 2026
- Betaris – 10 June 2026
- GFM – 10 June 2026

- GPS – 10 June 2026
- NCD – 10 June 2026

Members reviewed the reports from the following Link Governors which provided additional insights into the link areas:

TB – Digital Technology
MW – Careers

RESOLVED: The Committee and Link Governor reports were noted.
RESOLVED: The appointment of SH as a co-opted member of SSEC/GRS for a further year to July 2027

65/26 Items for Notification

Members reviewed the following items referred to in the committee reports and presented for by the committees.

- **External Audit Plan**
- **Internal Audit Plan**

RESOLVED: The Board endorsed the Audit Committee reappointment of RSM for next year.

Members were satisfied with both plans and had nothing to add.

RESOLVED: The Items for Notification were received and noted.

66/25 Use of College Seal

Members had received a report from JM on the use of the College Seal.

RESOLVED: The Board noted and endorsed the use of the Seal as set out in the paper.

67/25 Governance Matters

Governor Learning and Development Activity and Reports

Members received and noted the Governor Learning and Development Activity

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Governor Learning and Development activities.

Annual Review and Approval of Board and Committee Terms of Reference/Agenda Cycles and Appointment of Chairs

Members reviewed the Board, Audit, C&Q, GRS and SSEC Committee Terms of Reference and Agenda Cycles for the coming year 2026/27, which are reviewed annually and had been considered at committee level.

RESOLVED: The Terms of Reference and Agenda Cycles for 2026/27 were approved and the appointment of Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs approved as follows:

Audit: AD Chair; Vice Chair MW
C&Q: SR Chair; Vice-Chair DB
SSEC and GRS: PL Chair; TD Vice-Chair of SSEC.

68/26 Any Other Business

The Chair noted that this was JM's last meeting as Interim Head of Governance and thanked her for her work.

69/25 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Business Board – 1 October 2026, Cheltenham Campus

SD left the meeting.

70/26 Approval of Non-Consolidated Staff Payment for 2025/26

Confidential External Members Only Minute.

71/26 SSEC Item

Confidential External Members Only Minute

71/25 SSEC Minutes 18 June 2026

Confidential External Members Only Minute