

**PUBLIC MINUTES OF
THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS BUSINESS BOARD MEETING HELD ON
27 MARCH 2025**

Present:

Mr M Burgess (Principal)
Mr T Burrell (External Board Member)
Mr A Dover (External Board Member)
Mr N Greenway (Student Member)
Ms M James (External Board Member/Board Vice-Chair) (Chair)
Mr P Lachecki (External Board Member)
Dr H Moyes (External Board Member)
Ms S McKinlay (External Board Member)
Ms A Nutbrown (Staff Member)
Ms G Read (External Board Member)
Ms S Robertson (External Board Member)
Mr M Williams (External Board Member)

Apologies:

Mr W Abbott (External Board Member/Board Chair)
Ms A Berry (External Board Member)
Ms S Dalby (Staff Member)
Mr M Fabian (External Board Member)
Mr D Kettlety - Director of Student Employment and Experience

In Attendance:

Mr A Bates - Chief Financial Officer
Ms J Cosson – Head of Governance
Dr K Morris – Vice-Principal, Curriculum and Quality
Ms H Snelling - Director of People and Culture

Attendance: 75%

16/25 Private Business

None.

17/25 Apologies

Were noted as above.

18/25 Declarations of Interest

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

19/25 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.

20/25 Membership Proposals

Members had been provided with a Membership Proposals paper.

JC reported that GRS had discussed succession planning and the possibility of extending WA and MJ's terms of office by a year to ensure continuity in the Board's operations. SH will step down as a Co-opted Member from the end of August but has agreed to remain as an independent member of GRS and SSEC. PL has agreed to take over as chair of GRS and SSEC from 1 September. TB has agreed to take on the Digital Technology Link Governor role from 1 September, ensuring a smooth transition in responsibilities.

RESOLVED: Members approved the recommendations of GRS as follows:

- That Mary James' term of office as a governor is extended by one year to 10 May 2026 and her term of office as Vice-Chair by one year to 31 March 2026.
- That Will Abbott's term of office as a governor is extended by one year to 18 October 2027 and his term of office as Chair by one year to 31 March 2027.
- That Peter Lachecki is appointed as Chair of GRS and SSEC from 1 September 2025 and stands down from the Audit Committee on 31 August 2025.
- That Scott Harvey stands down as a Co-opted Member of GRS, SSEC and the Audit Committee on 31 August 2025 but remains as an independent Member of GRS and SSEC from 1 September 2025.
- That Tim Burrell is appointed as Digital Technology Link Governor from 1 September 2025.
- That the designated Board size is confirmed as 17, noting the option to increase the Board size should further candidates be recommended for appointment.

21/25 Minutes of the Meeting of 6 February 2025

The minutes of the meeting were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

22/25 Matters Arising from the Minutes and Actions Matrix

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

23/25 Principal's Update (C)

MB provided an update on college activities, learner recruitment, student outcomes, people and culture, finance, operating plan, key risks, policy developments, curriculum reforms, devolution, government policies timeline, Ofsted framework consultation, estates, and cyber security.

He reported that the College is in a good place despite uncertainty and changes in the external environment.

RESOLVED: Members noted the Principal's Update.

24/25 Student Progress Update (C)

KM presented an update on key curriculum and quality issues including Apprenticeship outcomes for 2023/24, headline progress measures for 2024/25, progress against the Quality Improvement Plan for 2024/25, and internal and external reviews.

KM reported that the College is self-assessing as 'Good' against each category in the current Ofsted inspection framework.

In terms of headline progress measures for 2024/25, there are no indicators of concern requiring amendments to the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

Significant progress has been made in most aspects of the QIP.

MJ agreed that good progress had been made against the areas for improvement. She congratulated KM and the staff on their hard work and reported that C&Q had been reassured to read the two positive external review reports.

A Member asked if the College takes part in the UK Maths Challenge. KM reported that the College is part of a pilot group for CanDoMaths. The Member would be interested in seeing what this involves.

ACTION: JC to arrange for TB to speak to KM about CanDoMaths.

RESOLVED: The Student Progress Update was noted.

25/25 People Update (C)

HS presented a detailed report on recruitment, sickness absence rates, reward, health and wellbeing, professional development, and engagement.

Key developments include resourcing, safer recruitment compliance, reward, health and wellbeing, professional development, engagement, and people team restructure.

RESOLVED: The People Update was noted.

26/25 Financial Matters (C)

Management Accounts including Financial Forecast Update

AB provided an update on the College's financial position against KPIs, progress against the 3-year Financial Plan, and overall financial health.

Key updates included financial position, EBITDA, contributions from new higher education partnerships, LGPS contribution rates, operating cash movement, year-end cash balance, liquidity, borrowing, and bank covenants.

Members concluded that the position is encouraging but that much uncertainty remains with the potential for it to become much more difficult.

RESOLVED: The Management Accounts were noted.

Rent Review 125 Business Park

AB presented a paper requesting the Board's approval to a proposed rent increase.

Support for NCD Ltd

Members reviewed a paper concerning the arrangements between the College and New College Developments Limited.

27/25 Audit and Compliance (C)

Health and Safety Update

MB presented the Health and Safety Monthly Report to February 2025.

Key aspects included RIDDOR incidents, other highlights (e.g., Legionella testing, LOLER inspection), staff training and resources, risk assessments, and external assurance.

No significant issues were reported. The College's overall RAG rating for Health and Safety is positive.

TD confirmed that the report had been scrutinised in detail at the last Audit Committee meeting.

TD also confirmed that he had conducted his Link Governor meeting with the Health and Safety Manager prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the report and the current assessment of Health and Safety arrangements.

Risk Management Update

AB updated the Board on the changes to the Principal Risk Register, key threats, and emerging risks.

There continues to be significant policy uncertainty for the sector and the College. Key threats include economic health and changes to the curriculum landscape.

Members were satisfied that the key risks have been identified and are being managed.

RESOLVED: The Risk Management Update and latest changes to the Principal Risk Register were noted.

Subcontracting Update

AB introduced a paper updating Members on the current position with regard to the College's subcontracting arrangements.

RESOLVED: Members noted the Subcontracting Update and approved the continued subcontracting arrangements with Global ATS and UWE.

Internal Audit Update

AB provided an update on the internal audit position following the Board's review of internal audit services.

RESOLVED: The Internal Audit Update was noted.

28/25 Approval of Policies (C)

- **Admissions**
- **Reserves Policy**
- **Modern Slavery Statement**

Members reviewed the above policies.

RESOLVED: The policies were approved.

29/25 Committee, Subsidiary Company, and Link Governor Reports*: (C)

Members received reports from the Chairs of the following committees:

Betaris – 6 March 2025 - AB reported that Betaris is on track to meet its targets.

GRS – 30 January and 6 March 2025

Audit – 11 March 2025 – TD reported on the deep dives carried out by the Committee at the last meeting.

C&Q – 13 March 2025 - The C&Q report provided an overview of the curriculum and quality discussions held on 13 March 2025. The Committee had discussed the progress made in various academic programs and the strategies implemented to enhance student outcomes.

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

SH – Digital Technology

GR – Mental Health and Wellbeing

MW – Careers and Skills

LD - SEND

HM added that she had conducted her Link Governor meeting with DK and had been interested to learn about the discussion regarding inclusivity at the recent Executive Team away day. The next step is to understand how the Board feeds into the discussion.

The Chair thanked Link Governors for carrying out this crucial role. Their insights and observations foster collaboration and communication between the Board and College staff and help identify areas for further exploration and development.

RESOLVED: The Committee and Link Governor reports were noted.

30/25 Items for Notification

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

HE SED (from C&Q)

JC reported that the HE SED is a document that assesses whether the College meets the criteria for higher education standards. The HE Link Governor has reviewed the document, and it has been discussed at C&Q. All governors should be aware of the contents of the HE SED.

Governance Development Plan (from GRS)

JC reported that the Governance Development Plan had been discussed in detail at the last couple of GRS meetings following the outcome and recommendations from the External Board review results in May last year. The plan aims to improve governance practices and ensure the Board's effectiveness. The plan incorporates some quick wins, such as formalising the Chair's appraisal and one-to-one meetings with governors. Other longer-term areas of focus include developing Board Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. The next Strategy Board Meeting will include a session on Board diversity.

RESOLVED: The Items for Notification were received and noted.

31/25 Governance Matters

Governance and Regulatory Developments

JC presented a paper setting out the latest governance and regulatory developments that the Board needs to be aware of. These included details of the following matters and the actions to be taken in relation to each of them:

Safeguarding and Prevent

- **Online Safety Act 2023:** Implementation staged over the last year, with Ofcom enforcement regime effective from 17th March 2025. Providers have new duties to assess risks, prevent children from accessing harmful content, and enforce age limits.
- **ACT Early website:** Useful for spotting signs of radicalisation.

Financial Sustainability/Funding/Audit

- **FE Commissioner's Annual Report:** Published 23 January 2025, detailing activity between 1 August 2023 and 31 July 2024.
- **ESFA Closure:** Education and Skills Funding Agency will close on 31 March 2025, transferring functions to the Department for Education.
- **RSM's Board Assurance Framework Toolkit:** New toolkit for managing risks in education organisations.

Charity Investment Governance Principles

- **New Principles:** Launched to support trustees and charity leaders in governance and decision-making, complementing the Charity Commission's guidance.

Updated Accounting Standards

- **FE HE SORP Changes:** Planned for 2026-7 academic year, with significant changes in accounting for leases and revenue recognition.

Fraud Prevention

- **New Offence:** "Failure to prevent fraud" offence under the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023, effective from 1 September 2025.

Legislation/Legal

- **Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill:** Progressing through parliament, addressing safeguarding, welfare, and employment of children.
- **Employment Rights Bill:** Amendments approved by House of Commons.
- **Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill:** Known as Martyn's Law, aims to ensure premises are prepared for terrorist attacks.
- **Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023:** Implementation reaffirmed, protecting free speech and academic freedom.
- **Procurement Act 2023:** Came into force on 24 February 2025, enhancing transparency and competitive tendering.

Curriculum

- **CAR Interim Report:** Published 18 March 2025, highlighting challenges in the current education system and the need for changes in curriculum and assessment.

Meeting Skills Needs

- **Guidance on Annual Accountability Agreements:** Updated for 2025-2026, emphasizing local needs duty and strategic conversations.

Sustainability

- **DfE Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy:** FE institutions expected to have a Sustainability Lead and Climate Action Plan by September 2025.
- **Simpler Recycling:** New waste legislation effective from 31st March 2025.

Governance

- **FE Guide Update:** Clarifications on local needs duty and fraud prevention.
- **AoC Board Review Report:** Comprehensive report on external board reviews.
- **Effective Senior Postholder Appraisal and Chair Performance Review Guidance:** Official DfE version published.

AI

- **Hull College Hello Future Publication:** Discusses the role of college governance in the AI revolution, emphasising ethical standards and risk management.

Governor Training and Development

Training Opportunities: Various programs and webinars available for governors, including ETF Governance Development Programme and AoC networks.

Anything requiring action has been passed to the relevant member of staff.

JC reported that, since the paper was written, there has been a raft of audit-related government publications which will need to be reviewed by the Audit Committee. In particular, the Post 16 Audit Code of Practice has been replaced with a Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountants.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Governance and Regulatory Developments since the last meeting and the actions taken as a result.

Governor Learning and Development Activity Record and Governor Learning and Development Reports

Members reviewed the Governor Learning and Development Activity and Reports and noted the importance of governor learning and development activities. The Chair thanked Members for undertaking these activities.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Governor Learning and Development activities, which enrich governors' understanding and oversight of the College.

Outcome of Board Meeting Logistics Survey

JC provided a summary of the outcome of the Board Meeting Logistics survey. The survey indicated that there was little appetite to change from the current meeting logistics. Some responses requested different timings and locations, but the majority felt that the current schedule works well. GRS will continue to review meeting logistics as board composition changes and different needs arise.

32/25 Any Other Business

No additional business was raised.

33/25 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Strategy Board Meeting – 22 May 2025, 4pm. TBC

EXTERNAL MEMBERS' ONLY ITEM (C)

34/25 SSEC Minutes 6 March 2025 and SSEC Chair's Report to Board

Confidential External Members Only Minute

Signed:



Dated:

22/5/25