

**Members:**

**Peter Thomas (Chair); Sam Best; Becky Bevins; Julian Bisset (Staff Teaching); Mark Bolton (Principal); John Clark; Paul Clowes; Lee Harwood; Jo Howarth; Nicola McKenzie; Jag Ner; Gayle Pogson (Staff Business); Emma Read; Louise Reah; Jo Roundell Greene; Scott Roy; James Scott; Karl Tucker; David Woan**

**Clerk (Governance Professional): Gillian Keogh**

**In attendance:**

**Emma Cox (Vice Principal Infrastructure and Projects); James Pill-Waring (Vice Principal of Finances and Corporate Services); Donna Short (Vice Principal Quality of Education)**

**Item 2: Jill Stubbs (Nursery Centre Manager)**

**Bold** indicates presence at the meeting.

Papers are received 7 days ahead of the meeting and are taken as read.

Item	Detail	Owner
1	<b>MEETING PRELIMINARIES</b> Apologies were received from Julian Bisset, Paul Clowes, Nicola McKenzie, Gayle Pogson, Jo Roundell Greene, Scott Roy, James Scott, Karl Tucker and David Woan. The meeting remained quorate throughout. There were no declarations of interest to note.	
2	<b>NURSERY CENTRE</b> The Board <b>NOTED</b> the new Nursery Centre, Jill Stubbs, who took over as manager in April. She provided an update on the nursery's operations, including staffing, budget, and upcoming changes in funding. The Manager highlighted the nursery's success in maintaining a high level of staff training and engagement, as well as the challenges posed by changes in government funding.  The Manager emphasised the nursery's commitment to staff training and development. The staff are passionate about their roles and keen to pursue further training. The nursery adapts its curriculum based on children's interests, ensuring a dynamic and engaging learning environment. The nursery is operating over budget, with a predicted surplus of up to £50,000 by the end of the year. There is a large waiting list for baby places, extending to January 2027, indicating high demand for the nursery's services. There are upcoming changes in government funding, including the increase in funded hours for babies from 15 to 30 hours per week starting in September. This change poses a financial challenge as the funding rate is below the nursery's hourly rate, leading to a potential shortfall. The nursery has updated its fees policy to be more transparent, allowing parents to opt out of additional charges for meals and enhanced provisions. So far, no parents have opted out, and the nursery's strong reputation and comprehensive services are expected to maintain this trend.  Members were concerned about the potential financial impact if parents opt out of paying for additional services at the nursery. Members discussed the measures in place to mitigate this risk, including the nursery's strong reputation and the current	

	<p>budget surplus. The current budget surplus of £50,000 provides a buffer against potential financial impacts.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> The Nursery Centre Manager to provide the Board with an update on the impact of the new funding and charges policy by January 2026.</p> <p>The Corporation unanimously <b>APPROVED</b> on the <b>RECOMMENDATION</b> of the Finance Committee the <u>P53 Nursery Policy Admissions, Fees and Funding.</u></p>	Nursery Manager
3	<p><b>CASE STUDY</b></p> <p>The VPQofE introduced a Foundation Learning student, highlighting her significant achievements, including the three CCR qualifications and a silver Duke of Edinburgh Award. The support team played a crucial role in her success, providing individualised and multi-sensory support ensuring her full engagement in College life. She is now transitioning to adult social care, where she will receive personalised training related to her next steps. The College has prepared her well for this transition, ensuring she is ready to move on to the next phase of her life.</p>	
4	<p><b>MATTERS ARISING (MA)</b></p> <p>The Action and Query sheets were <b>NOTED</b> and accepted. Actions were either complete, included elsewhere on today's agenda or being appropriately tracked and carried forward.</p>	
5	<p><b>CHAIR'S REPORT</b></p> <p>The Chair informed members of the need for the Board to approve the <u>transfer of land for new substations</u> as part of the big build project.</p> <p>The VPI&amp;P had provided an executive summary, with verbal commentary, presenting the need for the Board to approve the transfer of land for the new substations, which are essential for the big build project. She explained that the current substation would be removed and replaced by two new ones, and the land transfer was necessary for this process. It was emphasised to members that without the substations, the new buildings could not be operational, making this step crucial for the project's success. The VP&amp;P detailed the legal and logistical aspects of the land transfer, including the need for approval from Lloyds Bank, which holds a legal charge over the site. She assured the members that Lloyds had agreed in principle, and the paperwork was in process.</p> <p>Following review and discussion the Board unanimously <b>APPROVED</b> the land transfer, recognising its importance in preventing delays to the big build project. They also unanimously <b>APPROVED</b> for Peter Thomas, the Chair, and Mark Bolton, Principal, to sign the land transfer deed and for the College Seal to be applied by the Clerk.</p> <p>The Board <b>CONFIRMED</b> they were not aware of any communication, objection, or dispute from any third party regarding the Conveyance dated 25 June 1948 made between (1) Ewens Johnson Limited and (2) Wilfred Ernest Palmer and Stanley Duckworth.</p>	
6	<p><b>CLERK'S REPORT</b></p> <p>The Governance Professional gave her Governance report at Item 10.</p>	
7	<p><b>PRINCIPAL'S REPORT</b></p> <p>The Board <b>NOTED</b> the Principals report, noting in particular; -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ESFA Funding Audit Update</li> <li>- Further Education Commissioner Financial Benchmarks 2025/26</li> <li>- Strategy – The Principal discussed the need for a clear strategy for governance and the importance of aligning with the Further Education</li> </ul>	

	<p>Commissioner's expectations. He emphasised the need for better scrutiny of the curriculum offer and the addition of governors with FE experience, which would enhance the Board's ability to make informed decisions and provide valuable insights. This will be discussed by members at the next strategy meeting in November.</p> <p>The Principal gave a HE update, noting in particular;—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HE is progressing well.</li> <li>- The 80 boards have been completed for the year. The College Assistant Principals have chaired them all.</li> <li>- National Student Survey (NSS) scores have been received and will be reported to CQA in the new academic year. The members noted that we are above benchmark on 30 of the 34 questions asked.</li> <li>- We have concluded the institutional validation with our new HE partner, the University of West England and we have achieved this with no conditions, 4 recommendations and 4 commendations.</li> </ul> <p>The members reviewed the <u>rolling list of headline risks</u> highlighted by the Principal,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leadership capacity and experience.</li> <li>- Maintain a brilliant learner experience and high outcomes.</li> <li>- Staff burnout/capability, projects/bids not focusing on day to day.</li> <li>- HR experience..</li> <li>- High Needs Experience</li> </ul> <p>The Board unanimously <b>APPROVED</b> a license extension to October 2025 for the <u>IOT – Collaboration Agreements and Participation Agreements</u>.</p>	
8	<p><b>CHAMPION UPDATE</b></p> <p>The board <b>NOTED</b> verbal updates from the Champions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SEND – The Champion, Louise Reah, is continuing to work with staff reviewing the QIP (quality improvement plan). Good improvements have been seen in a short space of time. She has challenged the team on the provision map to measure the impact of SEND provision and ensure there is adequate funding. The team felt well supported by SMT.</li> <li>- Safeguarding – The Champion, Sam Best, reported to members that an increase of 77% in concerns raised, although this is due to staff being more aware of the reporting system. Learner feedback from learner survey, in regard to access to mental health support, a presentation has been arranged to provide information on how to access this support. Learners, with an identified medical condition, have now been added to my concern. A process has been introduced for external support.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked the Champions for their reports.</p>	
9	<p><b>GOVERNOR UPDATES</b></p> <p>There were no student or staff Governors present.</p>	
10	<p><b>SEARCH AND GOVERNANCE</b></p> <p>The Board <b>NOTED</b> a Governance report from the Clerk as the earlier meeting had been rescheduled to September due to attendance, noting in particular;—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Average attendance figures as of 03 July 2025 for the Corporation and its Committees for 2024/25, overall 89%, up from 79% last year. Members noted that the overall attendance across the network average was 80%.</li> <li>- Role specifications were provided to members for the current Champion vacancies, EDI and Sustainability.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Following the external board review, Spring 2024, a recommendation was received to implement a board portal. At that time companies did not have a 'summarising' function, and a decision was taken to wait until now. Members noted the implementation timeline. Full implementation would be expected to be in September 2026.</li> <li>- The members discussed the need to increase the membership of the Audit Committee to meet the terms of reference. The Clerk and members mentioned potential candidates, and the members agreed to continue seeking additional members.</li> <li>- Staff Business Governor – Members <b>NOTED</b> the suggested timeline and agreed that a replacement for Gayle Pogson should be in position by the end of September to allow for a 3-month handover period before Gayle leaves in December.</li> </ul> <p>The Clerk informed members that Instrument 13(8) has been deleted regarding voting rights of student governors under 18. Following guidance from the DfE, the Chairty Commission has agreed with the DfE that the clause is incompatible with charity law as it prevents student governors under 18 from fully exercising their role as charity trustees. The Board unanimously <b>APPROVED</b> The Instrument and Articles and <b>APPROVED</b> their publication on the College website.</p>	
11	<p><b>TEACHING AND LEARNING</b>  <b>(including Curriculum, Quality and Assurance Committee Business)</b></p> <p>The Board <b>NOTED</b> the business summary, including risk, from the CQA Committee meeting held on 19 June 2025, noting in particular;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local Needs Duty and Accountability Agreement 2025/26. These documents reflected the College's strategic response to local needs, including progress in Skills Bootcamps, Supported Internships, and T Level implementation. Board members will be invited to review and discuss the Local Skills section and accountability statements (final 3 pages) with a focus on immediate priorities. Champions will lead this discussion, ensuring alignment with local labour market intelligence. Scheduled for the next strategy meeting in November.</li> <li>- Members questioned if the curriculum meets local needs effectively and how they can further challenge and influence its development. Members were encouraged to explore mechanisms such as business breakfasts or sector specific engagement events to provide regular employer input and curriculum challenge.</li> <li>- Tools or training to help governors provide more effective scrutiny of the curriculum design was also discussed.</li> <li>- Attendance across curriculum areas has continued its upward trajectory, providing assurance that strategies to support learner engagement are having a measurable impact.</li> <li>- Learner Survey 2 – members noted the high satisfaction levels being reported through the student survey.</li> </ul> <p>The Board <b>NOTED</b> the <b>APPROVAL</b>, on the <b>RECOMMENDATION</b> of the CQA Committee, following review by the Champions, of the <u>Accountability Statements</u>, which were <b>APPROVED</b> via email.</p>	
12	<p><b>INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE</b></p> <p>The Board <b>NOTED</b> the business summary, including risk, from the Infrastructure Committee meeting held on 23 June 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Big Build Update – project managers reports had been received giving updates and progress. A Cost report was shared with members, showing the budget relatively unchanged at £3.9m, most of which will be capitalised and is affordable. It is included in the current 3-year financial plan.</li> <li>- OFS Hydrogen Project – this project has now finished. It was a success and came in within budget, with the team being able to fully optimise the</li> </ul>	

	<p>funds, stretching them to cover even more than what was initially planned for.</p>	
13	<p><b>FINANCE</b>  <i>The minutes for this item are recorded in a separate set of confidential minutes.</i></p>	
14	<p><b>CONSENT AGENDA</b>  The Board unanimously <b>APPROVED</b> on the <b>RECOMMENDATION</b> of the Audit Committee the following policies;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- P19 Whistle Blowing Policy</li> <li>- Anti-Fraud Policy</li> </ul> <p>The Board unanimously <b>APPROVED</b> on the <b>RECOMMENDATION</b> of the Audit Committee the 2025/26 Insurance Renewal Quote.</p> <p>The Board unanimously <b>APPROVED</b> on the <b>RECOMMENDATION</b> of the Audit Committee the External Auditor - Acceptance of the Engagement Pack.</p> <p>The Board unanimously <b>APPROVED</b> the following policies;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- P70 Sexual Misconduct and Harassment Policy</li> <li>- P66 HE Student Transfer Policy</li> <li>- P84 Fitness to Practice Policy</li> <li>- R47 Assessment and APL RPL Procedure V2.1 - Biannual</li> <li>- P45 Fees Policy</li> <li>- P44 Safeguarding and Prevent Policy</li> <li>- Health and Safety Policy</li> <li>- Business Code of Conduct</li> <li>- Lockdown Procedure</li> <li>- Freedom Of Speech Policy</li> </ul> <p>The Board <b>NOTED</b> the Use of the Corporation Seal 2024/25</p> <p>The Board <b>NOTED</b> the Committee Minutes, as listed;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CQA Committee – 19 June 2025</li> <li>- Infrastructure Committee – 23 June 2025</li> <li>- Finance Committee – 26 June 2025</li> <li>- Audit Committee – 03 July 2025</li> </ul> <p>The Corporation unanimously <b>APPROVED</b> the Public minutes of the Corporation meeting, 15 May 2025, as a correct record and, <b>APPROVED</b> non-confidential minutes for website publication.</p>	
15	<p><b>RISK MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROLS</b>  <b>(Including Audit Committee business)</b></p> <p>The Board <b>NOTED</b> the Business summary, including risk, from the Audit Committee meeting – 03 July 25. Noting in particular;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health and Safety improvements seen throughout the year.</li> <li>- An update on the DFE funding audit was received.</li> <li>- Review of the recommendations following the Weston College failings report.</li> <li>- Risk reporting process now well embedded within the sub-committees.</li> <li>- Internal Audit plan for 2025/26.</li> <li>- Compliance with the OFS conditions assurance.</li> </ul>	

	<p>There was no Whistleblowing / Fraud/ Health and Safety RIDDORS instances to report. There were no risk and internal control matters arising from today's business or not covered elsewhere on the agenda to bring to the Boards attention.</p> <p>The Chair thanked members for their attendance and invited attendees for their reports.</p>	
<b>16</b>	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p>There was no other business to note.</p>	
	<p><b>NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>Thursday 13 November 2025 @ 4:00pm – as part of the Strategy Meeting.</p>	
	18:20 The meeting closed.	