

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION BOARD
THURSDAY 10 July 2025

Location: Boardroom 2, Cauldon Campus / Microsoft Teams

Time: 09:30

Present:	Jeremy Cartwright, Chair	In person
	Hassan Rizvi, Principal & CEO	In person
	David Boughey	Remote
	Carmen Gonzalez-Eslava	In person
	Bernard Kumeta	In person
	Hannah Molloy	Remote
	Tom Nadin	In person
	Raheel Nawaz	Remote
	Tony Matthews	In person
	Marcin Musial	In person
	Steve Sawbridge	Remote
	David Shufflebottom	In person
	Chrissy Pawlischyn	In person
	Mekdes Mideksa	In person
In Attendance:	Kay Kavanagh, Director of Governance	In person
	Antoinette Lythgoe, Chief Financial Officer	In person
	Cath Brierley, Deputy Principal	In person
	Nova Abela, Chief People Officer	In person
	Dave Hopley, Assistant Principal Student Experience	In person

No.		Action
1-6	Confidential agenda items See confidential minutes	
7	Welcome & Apologies Apologies for absence were received from Sally Garratt, Ben Richards, Rob Fisher, Jenny Scrivens, Farhad Arian and Wendi Brennan.	
8	Declaration of Interest in any of the items on the agenda The Chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have in agenda items to be discussed. No specific declarations were made and standing declarations were noted.	
9	Minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2025 Governors approved the minutes of the meeting on 22 May 2025 as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.	
10	Action Progress Report Governors noted that all actions were complete or would be covered by the agenda.	
11	Student Voice & Enrichment Report The Assistant Principal Student Experience presented the Student Voice & Enrichment Report and added that the recent 'Talking Heads' video was available on the Governor portal for viewing.	

The on-site cross-College Enrichment activities concluded on Friday, 23rd May for this academic year.

After the Students' Union Elections held in May 2025, Eli Bray, a Sports Development and Coaching student, was selected as the Student Governor for 2024/25. Eli Bray will serve as the Students' Union President for the upcoming academic year. The Assistant Principal Student Experience thanked the current student governors and added that they are all progressing to university.

The governors noted positive student feedback across both campuses, indicating consistency in student experience. They also recognised the limited availability of sports facilities at the Burslem campus. The Chair added that this is consistent with the message at Learner Voice Conferences where all students favour their own respective campus.

15 students have undertaken a 4-day trip to Erlangen, Germany as part of a 12-week enrichment programme. The trip included:

- a visit to Staatliche Berufsschule Erlangen State Vocational School,
- school workshops for motor vehicle, engineering, health and social care and sport,
- a tour of the Siemens training and development centre
- Exploring Reichsparteitagsgelände (the grounds of Nuremburg rally) and finding out more about World War II.

The college bid to UK-German Connection fund has been successful and the College has been awarded the maximum of £5,000; this reduces the College contribution to this and allows for sustainability of this programme.

Challenge South Africa has relaunched. Out of 57 applicants, 22 learners were selected after interviews, and fundraising is in progress.

Enrichment 2025/26 launches in September 2025, during induction week and Freshers Festival. Redesigned with input from staff and learners at the May 2025 Learner Voice Conference, the programme will feature Dance, Cricket, and Inter Campus Sports Competitions.

A governor **asked** how attendance is measured and what qualifies for inclusion in the data. The Assistant Principal Student Experience explained that while regular attendance is required, shorter activities are measured differently.

A governor **asked** about measuring the impact of enrichment activities, such as student surveys. The Assistant Principal Student Experience stated that Challenge Programmes are evaluated before and after participation, while general enrichment activities are assessed through skills development and tutorial reviews.

A governor **asked** about participation in Challenge programmes by students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Assistant Principal Student Experience confirmed a diverse mix of learners from all areas participate. **Action:** The Assistant Principal Student Experience to provide data on participation levels for disadvantaged students on Challenge programmes.

Assistant
Principal
Student
Experience

12 Principal/CEO Report

The Principal/CEO presented their report, confirming that the College, overall, remains in a strong position.

Highlights from the report include:

- There are currently 2,325 Study Programme learners against the allocation of 2,147 (8% more than allocation) and the applications (16-18) for 2025/26 are approx. 30% higher than the same time last year.
- Retention is already 5% above 2023/24 and 3% above KPI (subject to minor adjustments) and is a good indicator for improved outcomes.
- The College expects the financial health for the year to be outstanding.
- Progress against the two identified 'Above and Beyond' strategic objectives following the Governor Strategy days continues.
- The progress against the performance measures on accountability statement 2024/25 is strong. All targets are met, except for HTQs, where the work continues for 2025/26.
- As discussed at the CEO Futures Forum, the MPs, City Council and the trusts in the city are keen to replicate/modify the MBacc model (Manchester based) in Stoke and Staffordshire.
- The predicted overall outcomes are on track to be in line with the ranges updated to the Corporation.
- The People Strategy 2024-26 sets out our commitments aligned to Strategic Priority 4 – Empowering our People. The action plan for 2025/26 will incorporate key actions in response to the outcomes of the 2024/25 Annual Staff Survey, ensuring alignment with staff feedback and organisational priorities.

Continued risks include Capital Projects, Ofsted, and student experience. (induction).

There were no questions.

13 TF&R Committee

The Chief Financial Officer reported that the committee reviewed the Management Accounts and committee members noted that all KPIs surpassed the new FE benchmarks.

The Chief Financial Officer stated that following the TF&R meeting, the allocation was confirmed, and the college is projected to have a £45k net effect on EBITDA.

Governors approved:

- the budget for 2025/26 and the forecast for the following year
- putting cash of up to £2m on overnight deposit with Lloyds Bank until the treasury management arrangements have been reviewed in more detail over the summer.

Governors **discussed** the options around investing cash surpluses. **Action:** Chief Financial Officer to present options for cash investment, in line with 'Managing Public Money'.

Chief Financial Officer

Governors **requested** a longer-term approach to budget planning. **Action:** Chair to consider including 'Longer-Term Budgets and Financial Strategy' on the 2026 Governance Strategy Day agenda.

Chair /
Director of
Governance

Digital Strategy

The Chief Financial Officer stated that the board approved the Digital Strategy last year, and it has now been updated to include AI. The updated strategy was reviewed at the TF&R committee meeting.

Governors **approved** the updated Digital Strategy.

HRIS Procurement

The Chief People Officer presented the item confirming that a comprehensive review of the College's current HR systems and their functionality has been undertaken in response to several critical factors.

Following a tender process, the decision reached is to proceed with a contract variation with the existing provider, Frontier Software PLC.

Governors **asked** the following questions:

What will the new system achieve? It will enable the college to have all HR processes in one place (i.e. CPD, performance management, recruitment, database of staff). It will provide a significant improvement for users.

What is the annual cost? Currently the annual fee is £17k, this will increase to £34k. It will result in cost savings from other systems that will no longer be required.

Action: Chief People Officer to provide an update on the implementation plan and impact of the new HR system.

Chief People
Officer

Governors **approved:**

- Variation to contract and Broadbean acquisition software: £34,227 (inclusive of VAT) annual cost. Includes complete system and all modules.
- One-off cost to procure the upgrade to the latest version of the HR system is capped at £139,070 (inclusive of VAT).

Committee Terms of Reference

The Director of Governance presented the committee Terms of Reference, confirming that they had been recommended for approval by the committee.

Governors **approved** the TF&R Terms of Reference for 2025-26.

14 Audit Committee

Governors noted the minutes of the Audit Committee held on 4th July 2025 and **approved** the extension of ICCA as Internal Auditors for a further 2 years.

Governors **approved:**

- Internal Audit Plan 2025/26
- External Audit Plan 2024/25

Following the recent report of Burnley College, a governor **asked** if the data provided to governors is audited? The Chief Financial Officer explained that the Board Assurance, available with the Risk Register, gives assurance of the accuracy of the data and the source.

Action: Audit Committee to discuss the validity and assurances around data provided to governors (following the recent report of Burnley College).

Audit
Committee

The Director of Governance presented the committee Terms of Reference, confirming that they had been recommended for approval by the committee.

Governors **approved** the Audit Committee Terms of Reference for 2025-26.

15 CQS Committee

The Deputy Principal provided an overview of the report, highlighting:

- Currently there are 2,325 Study Programme learners of our allocated 2,147 places for the whole academic year; there are 172 learners with EHCP and of these 91 are High Needs
- Retention at R10 is above KPI for all aspects, + 3.2% for all ages, +2.1% for 16-18 and + 4.3% for adults, this is an improvement on this time last year
- The College is predicting achievement between 81-85% for Study Programme, 82-86% Adults and Overall, 82-86% which are comparable to National Averages
- The College work experience provision is currently at 87.4% for Study Programme learners who have a confirmed work placement (confirmed, ongoing or completed). The process still continues.
- Overall attendance is 80.1% vs KPI 88%. From August 1st the Colleges 4 Attendance Officers will be line managed by the Colleges Tutorial Manager to provide a wraparound triangulation for each learner academic and attendance performance across all aspects of their Study Programme to improve cross College attendance
- In 2024/25, there are a total of 8 first year T Levels courses running, 11 are planned for 2025-26
- Study Programmes had 1072 learners resisting GCSE maths and 1039 learners resisting GCSE English compared to 885 learners resisting GCSE maths and 879 learners resisting GCSE English in 2023/24
- YTD Apprenticeship achievement is at 58% vs a KPI of 63%. Predicted achievement 2024/25 will be between 60-63%

Governors **asked** how the college will perform against national averages for apprenticeships. The Deputy Principal advised that final data will be known in the autumn term and brought to the CQS committee. The Deputy Principal added that every learner is risk-rated, and a long-standing governor added that substantial improvements have been made regarding apprenticeships, and the impact of initiatives is now being seen.

A governor **asked** about attendance data and what measures are in place to improve attendance. The Deputy Principal confirmed that the college is confident to reach the same attendance levels as 2023-24.

A governor **requested** reassurance around the impact of teaching staff observations. **Action:** Deputy Principal to provide data concerning the impact of staff observations, including the % of teaching staff observations against all teaching staff.

Deputy
Principal

A governor asked how the Tutorial approach will be reported on (to show impact). **Action:** Deputy Principal to provide an update (including impact), regarding the new Tutorial approach for 2025-26.

Deputy
Principal

Governors **noted** the final version of the Accountability Statement.

The Director of Governance presented the committee Terms of Reference, confirming that they had been recommended for approval by the committee.

Governors **approved** the CQS Committee Terms of Reference for 2025-26.

16 Governance Committee

In the absence of the Chair of the committee, the Director of Governance provided an update following the recent committee meeting.

There will be 5 governor vacancies over the coming academic year. Recruitment will be prioritised in the Spring of 2026.

Governance arrangements were reviewed following the FE Commissioner report for Weston College. Committee members were reassured that all governance arrangements are in place.

Following recommendation from the committee, Governors approved:

- Governor, Committee Membership & Link Governors 2025-26
- Annual Calendar of Meetings 2025-26
- Governor Visits Schedule 2025-26
- Committee Terms of Reference
- Annual Cycle of Business

17 Policies

Governors noted that all policies had been recommended by committees. The Director of Governance explained the updates made to the Instrument & Articles and the Standing Orders, following advice from the DfE.

Governors **approved:**

- Data Protection Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Standing Orders
- Instrument & Articles
- Scheme of Delegation
- Pay Policy
- Flexible Working Policy & Procedure

18 Any Other Business

The Chair acknowledged that this was the final Corporation Board meeting for the student governors and David Boughey, due to their impending ending of their respective terms of office. All were thanked for their contributions.

19 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting is due to be held on 23 October 2025 at 09:30.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at: 12.:20.