

## Corporation Meeting – Quality & Curriculum

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2025 4.00pm – 7.00pm at Blossomfield Campus

<b>Present</b>	Paul Assinder – Chair of Corporation Tony Lucas – Vice Chair of Corporation Susie Ankrett Christine Abbott Rebecca Gater – Principal and CEO Sue Hopewell Helen Kinghorn Ravi Kumar Graham McKean Mehreen Mirza Amirun Nehar Cheryl Pidler Holly Bayliss – Staff Governor Harrison Thompson
<b>In Attendance</b>	Sam Bromwich – Director of Corporate Governance, Risk and Compliance, Nancy Buckley – Vice Principal Business Growth, Skills and Partnerships, Pete Haynes – Vice Principal HR and Student Services, Heather Hunt – Deputy Principal and CFO, Linda McLaughlin – Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum, Tina Taylor – Senior Governance Officer.
<b>Apologies</b>	Dave Nanda, Sharmin Rima – HE Student Governor, Sarah Horton-Walsh, Megan Bacalla – FE Student Governor

### 1. Welcome and Announcements

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the Quality and Curriculum Corporation meeting and provided an overview of the agenda items to be discussed. Appreciation was extended to the Vice Principal for Quality & Curriculum, as many of the reports presented were prepared by her.

A warm welcome was also given to Holly Bayliss, Staff Governor, attending her first Corporation meeting. Governors were advised that she will also present under item 10 in her role of Head of Quality - Teaching, Learning and Innovation.

### 2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Dave Nanda, Sharmin Rima – HE Student Governor, Sarah Horton-Walsh and Megan Bacalla – FE Student Governor.

### 3. Declarations of Interest

The Principal and CEO declared an interest, under item Under item 6 – Institute of Technology, noting her role as a director of the company.

### 4. Membership Update

The report outlined on the composition, membership and any vacancies of the Corporation and its committees and advised Corporation on any appointments necessary or extended terms of office.

Kelvin Nash has stepped down from his role with immediate effect due to personal commitments. The vacancy will now be considered for appointment.

Helen Kinghorn was confirmed as the Chair of Quality Special Interest Group (SiG).

The following Term of Office extensions were **RATIFIED**:

- Helen Kinghorn 1<sup>st</sup> Term of Office ended 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025, extended by another 3 years to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2028.
- Susie Ankrett 1<sup>st</sup> Term of Office ends 1<sup>st</sup> November 2025 extended by another 3 years to 1<sup>st</sup> November 2028.
- Dave Nanda – 1<sup>st</sup> Term of Office expires 31<sup>st</sup> October 2025, extended by another 3 years to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2028.
- Christine Abbott – Term of office expires December 2025. Extended for another term of 4 years to December 2029.
- Susie Ankrett – EDI Link Governor

The Chair acknowledged the strength of the current Corporation, highlighting the breadth of expertise across its membership, and expressed sincere thanks to all involved.

#### **5. Chair's Action and Use of College Seal and Chair's E-signature**

The report was shared and **NOTED**

#### **6. Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the Previous Corporation Meeting and Actions List held on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025**

The previous minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025 were circulated and **APPROVED**. The confidential minutes were not shared with Staff and Student Governors due to the nature of the discussions.

##### **6.1 Matters Arising (verbal)**

None to be discussed

##### **6.2 Actions**

Received and noted.

#### **7. Committee Minutes**

The following draft minutes were circulated and **NOTED** for information:

##### 7.1 Quality SiG – 25.06.2025

The Chair of the Group clarified that the current scope of work does not include student destinations. However, it was noted that this could be incorporated when relevant data becomes available. **ACTION**

##### 7.2 Property SiG – 13.08.2025

The Chair of the Group noted that some activities have been placed on hold, while the remaining work is progressing. The Special Interest Group (SiG) has also been paused, with the intention to resume once a relevant programme is initiated. It was proposed to pause the meetings until the next appropriate trigger point, as continuing at this stage would place unnecessary demands on governor's staff time.

The Director of Corporate Governance, Risk & Compliance recommended that the Chair of the Group, along with the Deputy Principal and CFO, review the outstanding actions and lessons learned, and present their findings at the next Corporation meeting. **ACTION**

The Chair expressed thanks to the Chair of the Group for her considerable efforts in bringing the work to a strong position.

## 8. Chair's Update

The report summarised the activities of the Chair of the College and updated Governors on key developments. The Chair confirmed that the report should be largely taken as read.

### 8.1 – Top Key Risks were received

Governors were asked to note the colleges key risks paying particular attention to cyber-attack and the likelihood of it happening.

The Chair referred to the recent meeting with Riverside College, highlighting the valuable connection with an outstanding institution and the opportunity for mutual learning. It was noted that while there is much, we can learn from them, they too can benefit from our experience.

**A Governor observed** that the newly appointed FE Commissioner was previously a principal at an outstanding college and queried whether those links could be leveraged. In response, the Principal and CEO noted that while no formal engagement has taken place yet, efforts are underway to build a relationship that could enable future collaboration.

The Chair shared that a recent visit to the College by a National Leader of Governance (NLG), who works closely with the Chair, resulted in a positive outcome and valuable feedback.

Governors were reminded of the importance of completing all mandatory training, including the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) module. A return confirming completion is required, as this forms part of Ofsted's compliance expectations.

Positive feedback was received following the Governors' Development Morning, particularly in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). The Vice Principal for HR & Student Services expressed appreciation for the high level of engagement shown.

The Chair also acknowledged the recognition of World Teachers' Day and World Mental Health Day, both of which were noted during recent discussions.

The report was **NOTED** for information, understanding and decision making by governors.

## 9. Principal's Update

The principal's report was circulated which focused on Sector updates as per the report. The Principal and CEO advised that, since the paper was written, a further announcement regarding Vocational Levels (V levels) has been made. However, there is currently no additional information available to provide an update at this stage.

### Strategic ambition 1:

**Director of Quality Appointment:** The external recruitment process did not result in an appointment. Internal options are now being explored, including shadowing and development opportunities for a high-performing Head of School. The meeting's focus on quality aligns with this ambition.

**Start of Term:** The Quality team visited sessions across all campuses as part of the *Inspiring Inductions* initiative, observing excellent and engaging delivery. Over 30 student welcome talks were delivered by the Principal and CEO, Director of Student Services, and the Enrichment team.

**Student Experience Enhancements:** The *Ready, Respect, Safe* initiative has launched, with new 'Welcome Gates' installed at the Woodlands campus to support this.

**Management Changes:** All new starters are now in post for the start of term. Staff bios will be shared in the weekly newsletter.

**Ofsted Update:** The new Ofsted framework has now been launched.

**Strategic ambition 2:**

**CTEC Bid Outcome:** The CTEC bid was unsuccessful, and the West Midlands & Warwickshire (WMW) allocation has gone to Dudley College. As a result, £500k must be spent between the end of October and the end of March. All capital funding will be directed to WMCA, with colleges having to bid for funds

**Recruitment Update:** Recruitment data was shared, accurate as of 23 September 2025 as per the report.

**Strategic ambition 3:**

**Industrial Action & Staffing Update:** The Principal and CEO reported receipt of a letter from UCU requesting agreement to a 10% pay award, improved workload conditions including maximum class sizes and teaching hours. A response was issued declining the request, with the College's position outlined in the staff newsletter following concerns raised by some staff. The local UCU branch is now required to ballot members on potential strike action, although the Chair expressed a personal view that industrial action would not be appropriate.

The AoC has recommended a 4% pay award, acknowledging that many colleges may be unable to meet this. The College will continue to follow its usual pay review process.

**Staff Wellbeing & Communication:** The Staff Wellbeing Day held on 4 July saw strong engagement. A dedicated Teams channel was created, along with a hashtag to support ongoing wellbeing initiatives. The College is transitioning to Microsoft Teams as the preferred method of communication where face-to-face interaction is not possible or appropriate.

In reference to the communications strategy, the Director of Corporate Governance, Risk and Compliance noted that the team is working in collaboration with the LEARNTECH team to support its implementation and ensure effective communication with governors.

**Strategic ambition 4:**

Governors were briefed on the ongoing challenges associated with STEM growth projects. Attention was drawn to the discussions held during the Property SIG meetings on 13th August and 25th September noting further details are available within the associated papers and minutes of those meetings.

An update was provided on the installation of welcome gates at Woodlands Campus. Progress continues on the student residences, with a further update shared regarding the planning approval process.

**Strategic ambition 5:**

Governors received an update on the completion of underground pipework for the District Heat Network. Vital Energi are now progressing with the installation of the High Voltage Cable linking the Energy Centre to the National Grid. The final phases, including boiler decommissioning and transition to live operation, are scheduled for completion by Spring 2026.

An update on reputation and strategic partnership development was provided, as outlined in the accompanying report.

***During discussion, a governor raised concerns*** regarding enrolment in areas experiencing significant quality challenges. It was noted that if these areas have a disproportionate number of learners, this could adversely affect key performance indicators and pose a substantial risk. The

Principal and CEO responded by confirming that quality update reports will provide assurance on how these issues are being managed.

**The Chair queried** whether the College is gaining market share from other institutions, noting that this issue affects all sites. In relation to areas performing below target, the Principal and CEO advised that enrolment is currently approximately 10% below target in these areas. While the reasons remain unclear, it may be linked to planning accuracy rather than a lack of student interest. It was acknowledged that target-setting is not an exact science.

The report was **NOTED** for information, understanding and decision making by governors.

#### **Strategic Plan Progress Update 5**

An update was given relating to the Strategic Plan Progress Update 5 and a copy was shared and **APPROVED**.

The Principal and CEO confirmed that the strategic ambitions had been revised in response to feedback received during the briefing session and subsequent suggestions from governors. Governors were invited to share any additional comments via email if they wished and were reminded that they still have the opportunity to do so. A final version of the Strategic Plan 2026–2028 will be circulated for approval at the Corporation meeting in November.

### **10. Presentation**

The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum and the Head of Quality - Teaching, Learning and Innovation presented an update about Quality and Curriculum – A Continuous Vision for Excellence and impact. This included an overview of the Quality Team and their initiatives and targets, including the new *Ready, Respect, Safe* initiative which builds consistency, calm and care across our colleges.

#### **Discussions and questions**

Governors raised several questions regarding staff development and support. One governor queried what was being done to drive improvement in areas such as Maths and English. It was confirmed that group coaching is being considered due to staffing levels, with prioritisation based on need, and that trials are underway to explore effective strategies.

A further question was raised about whether more than one coach should be allocated to English and Maths to increase resource, and it was noted that this is currently under discussion.

Another governor asked how long a new teacher would typically spend with a coach. It was confirmed that coaching begins in the first week with induction and development learning walks, and the level of support is tailored to each staff member's experience.

In relation to digital capability, a governor questioned the potential impact if staff lack digital skills. It was noted that training will be provided, and recruitment processes may need to be adapted to reflect the expected level of digital experience.

Positive feedback was received regarding the CPD Roots initiative. A governor queried how its impact would be ensured. In response, it was confirmed that the College is exploring ways to manage staff who are not engaging effectively, including aligning coaching with learning walks. Further discussion addressed the need to be explicit about performance management, with a suggestion that this be incorporated into the HR Report submitted to Corporation.

Following a question regarding the 'Ready, Respect, Safe' initiative, it was noted that once targets are met, an email is sent to parents. Discussions took place around how similar approaches are implemented in other colleges and the importance of maintaining momentum.

With no further comments or questions the update was **NOTED** for information, understanding and decision making by governors.

*There was a short break for food.*

## **11. Quality, Curriculum, Teaching & Learning:**

The Vice Principal Quality and Curriculum presented the update.

### 11.1 Quality Report

The report outlined the initial Quality Report for 2025/26.

**A governor asked** how confident the leadership team is that departments are clear on their required actions. It was noted that the ongoing quality improvement processes, alongside the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) validations, will help refocus departmental priorities and ensure clarity of action.

The report was **NOTED** for information, understanding and decision making by governors.

### 11.2 Quality Improvement Strategy & Cycle 2025/26

To report presented the updated Quality Improvement Strategy and accompanying Quality Improvement Cycle for 2025/26.

Governors were advised that all schools, including those with high performance, are following the same quality cycle. It was noted that this approach will be structured into thematic areas, which will be reflected within the Quality Improvement Plan (QiP), with assurance provided through quality monitoring.

In relation to schools requiring intensive support, governors discussed the issue of underperformance in achievement outcomes. A question was raised about whether there are indicators in place to assess progress before students enter the exam room specifically, whether the 'patient is being stabilised'.

Further questions were raised regarding the Quality Improvement Cycle, specifically whether it demonstrates how employer engagement is embedded within the process. A query was also made as to why this topic is being discussed at Corporation when a dedicated Quality SIG exists. In response, the Principal and CEO explained that, as part of the Carver governance model, it is a collective responsibility to ensure Corporation members are informed. The purpose of the SIG was clarified, and the importance of maintaining a meaningful balance between detailed discussion and strategic oversight was emphasised.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the updated strategy and cycle for 2025/26.

### 11.3 Curriculum Plan 2025/26

The report outlined the Curriculum Plan for 2025/26 to Governors and was **NOTED** for information, understanding and decision making by governors.

### 11.4 Interim Achievement Report

The report was presented the interim achievement data for 2024/25.

Governors challenged the use of national averages and the shifting nature of conversations within schools. It was noted that there is a need to concentrate on the areas that will deliver the greatest impact specifically, Maths and English as part of a wider cultural shift.

The report was **NOTED** for information, understanding and decision making by governors.

### 11.5 Evaluation for Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

The policy was presented to seek approval of the Evaluation of the Teaching, Learning and Innovation Policy 2025/26. A copy of the CPD Roots Handbook was received.

The Evaluation of the Teaching, Learning and Innovation Policy 2025/26 was **APPROVED**

#### 11.6 Governor Involvement in Curriculum activities

The report was shared as a linked document and noted as having been discussed in detail at the recent Search and Governance Committee. It was presented to Corporation for information. An update was provided on how governor comments are fed back to Heads of School, and a query was raised regarding whether this feedback is also shared with students. A governor suggested that student feedback should be considered as part of the process.

The report was **NOTED** for information, understanding and decision making by governors.

#### 11.7 Feedback from Quality Special Interest Group (SiG) – verbal update

This item was detailed in the Quality SiG minutes under item 7.1.

### 12 **Bids and Projects including termly KPI report**

The report was presented which was to approval for WCC Bootcamps and Rail Futures, update governors on successful/unsuccessful bids over £100K and provide Governors with detailed oversight of projects over £250K.

The Bids and Project termly report was shared for information.

The following appendices were received

- Appendix 1 – Warwickshire County Council Bootcamp Funding Business Case
- Appendix 2 - Solihull-Stratford WCC Skills Bootcamps Proposal Template FY26-27
- Appendix 3 – Rail Futures Business Case
- Appendix 4 - Current bids and projects in progress £100K+.
- Appendix 5 – LSIF final report
- Appendix 6 – Rail Futures Marketing brochure

The Corporation **APPROVED** the WCC Bootcamp bid and Rail Futures Contract.

### 13 **Governance Items**

Verbal feedback was provided from the Search & Governance Committee, including confirmation of the approval of the Governors' Objectives for 2025/26 and the progression of Phase 2 of the External Board Review (EBR).

The Corporation **APPROVED** the Governors Objectives 2025/26.

Following a review of quotes, it was **APPROVED** that Rockborn will lead the next phase of the EBR.

An update was given on the commencement of the Chair's appraisal, which is a mandatory governance process.

The Register of Interests for Governors, EMT, and the Director of Corporate Governance, Risk and Compliance was shared for information, alongside the Terms of Reference and meeting dates for the Cheshire College Partnership. It was noted that engagement has taken place with Riverside College, and a meeting is planned with Kent College to explore collaboration opportunities with these outstanding institutions.

### 14 **Confidential**

None

#### **15 Policies – below the line**

The following policies were circulated 7 days prior to the meeting for consideration. With there being no comments or questions they were considered as **APPROVED** by default.

- Neonatal Care Policy
- Evaluation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy – **see item 11.5**
- Prevent Policy and Position Statement
- Quality Improvement Strategy – **see item 11.2**
- Safeguarding Young People and Adults at Risk Policy and Procedure
- Subcontracting Policy

#### **16 Item for information**

The following items were **NOTED** for information:

- Institute of Technology (IoT) report
- Gifts and Hospitality Report

#### **17 Any Other Business**

None.

#### **18 Future Dates**

Dates were confirmed as per the agenda.

The Chair thanked everyone, and the meeting ended at 7.20pm