

## Corporation Meeting (joint A&R Committee) – Finance/People/Resources

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025 6.00pm – 7.30pm  
at Stratford Upon Avon Campus

**Present**

Paul Assinder – Chair of Corporation  
Tony Lucas – Vice Chair of Corporation  
Susie Ankrett  
Christine Abbott  
Holly Bayliss – Staff Governor  
Rebecca Gater – Principal and CEO  
Sue Hopewell  
Helen Kinghorn  
Ravi Kumar  
Mehreen Mirza  
Dave Nanda  
Amirun Nehar  
Cheryl Pidler  
Sharmin Rima – HE Student Governor  
Harrison Thompson

**In Attendance**

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, Adam Thomas – Director of Student  
Services.

**Apologies**

Megan Bacalla – FE Student Governor, Sarah Horton-Walsh, Graham McKean

### 1. Welcome and Announcements

The Chair welcomed all attendees.

### 2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Megan Bacalla – FE Student Governor, Sarah Horton-Walsh and Graham McKean.

### 3. Declarations of Interest

None received.

### 4. Membership Update

Graham McKean has resigned from the position of Governor, and his term of office will end on 31 December 2025. Governors were informed that Peridot will begin recruiting for this role.

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

The report was shared and **NOTED**

**6. Minutes of the Previous Corporation Meeting and Actions List held on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2025**  
The previous minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2025 were circulated and **APPROVED**.

**6.1 Matters Arising (verbal)**

None to be discussed

**6.2 Actions**

The actions report was received and **NOTED**.

The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee emphasised the importance of completing mandatory training from a compliance perspective. Governors were asked to ensure all training is completed before the next Corporation meeting. It was noted that Boxphish is the designated training to help prevent cyber-attacks.

**A governor raised a question regarding student security.** The Deputy Principal and CFO explained that students use Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) and receive training during induction. However, education remains a high-risk sector for cyber-attacks. As part of digital training and capability building, a software package to support this initiative has been purchased. There is also a need to review how many students receive external emails to help reduce cyber risk. **ACTION**.

It was agreed to amend action item 10.4 with a revised due date of Spring term.

**7. Committee Minutes**

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

- Quality SiG – 23.09.2025
- Search & Governance Committee 27.09.2025
- Audit & Risk Committee 14.10.2025

**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.

The Chair referred to the AoC conference and asked for feedback, and thoughts and observations were discussed.

Governors will receive a briefing on the post-16 white paper and curriculum assessment review in the new year. **ACTION**

Following the update on the "Thank You" event, **a governor commented** that it does not fully address broader engagement with all staff and questioned whether it is the right event to achieve meaningful engagement. In response, the Chair explained that the chosen date was intended to avoid teaching commitments, enabling staff from other locations to attend. It was acknowledged that attendance numbers are difficult to predict for an optional event. The Chair noted that this event is intended as a starting point for future discussions and suggested that it may need to become a mandatory event.

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

**9. Principal's Update**

The report shared an update on key areas of the College.

Referring to the Strategic Plan, the Principal and CEO confirmed that the plan will be revised incorporating the feedback received between now and the December Corporation meeting. The

updated version will clearly outline the changes made, along with the rationale, and will be shared accordingly. **ACTION**

An update on sector developments was provided, highlighting an update on the new Ofsted framework with reports being published in January. It was noted that the February Governors' Development Day will focus on Ofsted updates for governors.

### **Strategic ambition 1:**

An update on the HE Graduation and Facilitated "Design Thinking" session was given. Governors were informed about the GCSE resits, noting that 2,166 students sat resit Maths and English exams, with some sitting two papers. Results will be published in January, which will indicate the impact on achievement rates. These resits were only for students who previously achieved a grade 3.

*In response to a question*, it was confirmed that the cohort included both current and previous-year students. When asked how 2,166 compares to previous years, it was noted that this represents a significant increase, as the strategy was changed to include all students with a grade 3.

### **Strategic ambition 3:**

The college held a successful Remembrance Parade this year, featuring a marching band for the first time, alongside members of the public and our Public Services students. Public Services lecturers delivered a poem and a speech, adding to the significance of the event.

The Whole College Development Day was hosted, focusing on levelling up through digital and cyber initiatives. Cohort 6 of the Aspiring Leaders programme was completed.

Referring to the Communications Review, the Deputy Principal and CFO confirmed that the college is working with an external organisation specialising in communication support. They will analyse feedback and data, then provide recommendations for both short-term quick wins and longer-term improvements. The Principal and CEO noted the work has already commenced and aligns with our strategic priorities, one of which focuses on communication in response to feedback from various sources.

A structure update was provided: Adults and Apprenticeships have been merged into a single directorate to streamline employer engagement and avoid duplication, ensuring provision meets the needs of both areas.

### **Strategic ambition 4:**

The update on Financial Health was received within the Audit & Risk (joint Corporation) papers for information, confirming a "Good" financial health rating.

An update about reputation and partnership building was provided as detailed within the report. A copy of the FE Commissioner Newsletter and CFFR letter were received for information.

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

*There was a short break for food.*

## 10. Presentation - Safeguarding /Mental Health

### 10.1 Safeguarding and Prevent Annual Report

The report provided Governors with an important update on safeguarding within the college, in particular activities in the 2024/25 academic year. The annual Safeguarding report was shared for information.

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

### 10.2 Mental Health and Wellbeing Report

It was noted that this is the first annual report to governors on the development and delivery of mental health and wellbeing support at the college. A detailed report was provided, accompanied by a short presentation highlighting the key points.

The Safeguarding and Mental Wellbeing presentation was delivered in detail.

Detailed discussions on safeguarding were held. **Governors sought clarification** on referral issues, low-level concerns, and external audit arrangements. The Director of Corporate Governance, Risk & Compliance confirmed that safeguarding is included on the risk register for external assurance, with the Safeguarding Link Governor providing audit assurance. **Concerns were raised** about the absence of a permanent safeguarding lead at Stratford and other campuses, leading to discussion on referral categories and safeguarding capacity. Assurance was given that safeguarding remains a priority, even where dual roles exist, and that Stratford has five safeguarding officers.

**Governors also queried** support for Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and Safeguarding Leads; it was noted that regular external supervision and strong internal support are in place. An increase in referrals at Woodlands prompted discussion on training, with confirmation that mandatory training and regular bulletins are provided. Finally, **governors questioned** how referral percentages compare to wider society; it was agreed this requires further exploration.

The Chair expressed thanks to the Director of Student Services for providing the update.

The Vice Principal - HR and Student Services provided an update on the HSE Wellbeing Survey

Detailed discussions took place regarding staff survey participation. **Governors noted** that support staff appear to see value in completing the survey, whereas teaching staff participation is lower, possibly due to workload pressures. **Concerns were raised** about bullying and harassment, and governors queried whether a policy exists; the Vice Principal – HR and Student Services confirmed that it does. **Governors emphasised** the need to act on this policy and foster a culture where staff feel safe to report concerns.

Governors also asked whether the survey is conducted annually and highlighted that results may vary depending on timing and workload pressures. The use of pulse surveys was suggested to capture more consistent feedback.

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

*The Director of Student Services left the meeting.*

## 11. Subcontracting Termly Report

The Vice Principal Business Growth, Skills and Partnerships presented the report which requested the approval of the DFE subcontract plans for 25/26 and to provide Governors with an update on the Sub-Contracting provision in for 2024/25.

***In response to a governor's question*** regarding concerns about job outcomes at RMF, the Vice Principal for Business Growth, Skills and Partnerships explained that funds are retained until delivery is confirmed.

The report was **NOTED** for information, understanding and decision making by governors. Corporation **APPROVED** the Subcontracting Plan for 2025/26.

## **12. Bids and Project Approval**

The report requested the approval for forthcoming bids over £100K and to update governors on successful/unsuccessful bids over £100K. A copy of the Coventry Council AI Apprenticeship Academy Business Case and current bids and projects in progress £100K+ was received.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the bid for AI Academy Apprenticeships for Coventry and surrounding councils.

## **13. Financial Regulations Policy and Regs – Recommendation from A&R**

The Director of Finance presented the revised draft Financial Regulations.

The Audit & Risk Committee **RECOMMENDED** the reports. These were subsequently **APPROVED** by the Corporation members during the joint A&R Committee and Corporation meeting.

## **14. Property Update**

The Deputy Principal and CFO gave an update on property issues and requested the approval approve the hire of a temporary classroom for Stratford (subject to planning).

**Governors asked** whether the matter was time-dependent and if it would be required next year. The Deputy Principal and CFO confirmed that it is available now and should be secured while possible. **A further question was raised** about the impact of leasing on earlier discussions; it was noted that the benefits of leasing outweigh the cost of purchasing a building.

The Corporation **APPROVED** to hire a temporary modular classroom building for the Stratford campus subject to planning.

## **15. Governance Items**

The Corporation were asked to consider the suggested changes to the Governors' Handbook for approval, which follows the recommendation from the Search & Governance Committee.

**A comment was made** regarding the Terms of Reference for the Property SIG, noting that the Chair is named, whereas other Terms of Reference do not include names. It was agreed that the name should be removed. **ACTION**

Governors also queried whether meetings on Teams apply to Corporation. It was agreed this should be amended to clarify that virtual meetings are at the Chair's discretion and only permitted if quoracy is maintained. **ACTION**

The Corporation **APPROVED** the Governors' Handbook subject to the agreed changes.

## **16. Confidential Items**

Confidential minutes - not for publication.

## **17. Policies**

The following policies were circulated 7 days prior to the meeting for consideration.

- Privacy Statement – Governors

- Privacy Statement – College Staff
- Privacy Statement – College Students
- Data Retention Schedule
- Data Protection Policy
- General Privacy Statement
- Data Archiving and Retention Policy

**A governor observed** that there was no reference to AI and questioned whether it should be included in the Data Protection Policy. The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee responded that this would fall under IT policies and will be addressed in due course, noting that most regulators have not issued guidance on this yet. It was agreed that this is something to consider in the future.

With there being no comments or questions, they were considered as **APPROVED**.

#### **18. Items for Information**

The Gifts and Hospitality Report was shared for information.

#### **19. Any Other Business**

None to discuss.

#### **20. Future Dates**

Dates were confirmed as per the agenda.

The Chair thanked everyone, and the meeting ended at 7.28pm