

**Non-Confidential Minutes of the Corporation Meeting  
held on 15 December 2025 at 5:30pm at Bishop Burton College**

<b>Corporation Members</b>	<b>Appointed as</b>	<b>Chair/Vice</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
Angela Moran	Independent Member	<b>Chair</b>	
Susan Hamer	Independent Member		<i>Via Virtual Attendance</i>
Jim Harris	Independent Member		
Chris Henson	Independent Member		
John Hurst	Independent Member		
Robert Knight	Independent Member		
Emma Middleton	Independent Member		
Adam Milner	Independent Member		
Olly Nicholl	Independent Member		<i>Via Virtual Attendance</i>
David Richardson	Independent Member		Apologies Noted
Martyn Thomas	Independent Member		<i>Via Virtual Attendance</i>
Gray Towse	Independent Member		
Ian Watson	Independent Member		
Danny Metters	Ex-Officio		
Laura Woodhouse	Staff Member		<i>Until Item 12</i>
VACANT	Staff Member		
Isaac Blakey	Student Governor	<i>Until Item 12</i>	
Ivy Knowles	Student Governor	<i>Until Item 12</i>	

  

<b>In Attendance</b>			
Kate Calvert	Chief People Officer	<i>Until Item 12</i>	<b>(CPO)</b>
Beth Curtis	Vice Principal Riseholme & Business Development	<i>Until Item 12</i>	<b>(VPRBD)</b>
Stephen Kelly	Chief Financial Officer	<i>Until Item 12</i>	<b>(CFO)</b>
Helen Wooldridge	Vice Principal Growth Planning & Performance	<i>Until Item 12</i>	<b>(VPGPP)</b>
Rachel Robson	External Board Review, Stone King Solicitors		<b>(EBR)</b>
Richard Lewis	RSM (External Auditors) <i>from 5:45pm until end of Minute 4.1</i>		<b>(RSM)</b>

(Minutes: 2025/26.4)

**Strategic Sprint: Growth Strategy & Curriculum Development**

Prior to the start of the Corporation Meeting, the Governors attended the “Growth Strategy & Curriculum Development”, Strategic Sprint Session which had been postponed from 5 November 2025. (*Saved in the Record as Power Point: Strategic Sprint: Growth Strategy & Curriculum Development*)

**Training: OFSTED - New Inspection Framework**

The Governors also undertook a Training Session on the new OFSTED Inspection Framework; provided by the College’s Vice Principal of Quality of Education and Skills, Sharron Mansell, via remote attendance. (*Saved in the Record as Power Point: Training: OFSTED - New Inspection Framework*)

**Staff and Student Stakeholder Voice**

Immediately prior to the start of the Corporation the Governors were provided with an opportunity to meet with staff and students to reflect on Term 1 of 2025/26.

**1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Meeting; noting and welcoming the attendance of Rachel Robson, the Corporation’s External Board Review. Susan Hamer, Martyn Thomas and Olly Nicoll attended the meeting virtually. Sharron Mansell was absent from the Meeting. Apologies for absence were received, **with consent**, from David Richardson

**Item of Urgent Business: Appointment of Governors**

Following discussion, the Corporation agreed to proceed with the appointment of new Independent Governors using an amended process, as the Governance, Search and Remuneration Committee (**GSR**) would not meet until March 2026. The process undertaken was outlined, including the review of applications, CVs, skills matrices,

interviews and campus tours where appropriate. The Interview Panel consisted of Gray Towse, Chris Henson, Ian Watson (all of whom are appointed to GSR), the DG and the Principal. All members of GSR had been kept apprised of the candidates, provided with all relevant information and been informed of the intention to bring the appointments directly to the Corporation Meeting, as a matter of urgent business, and that its support to the revised process and appointments be considered and confirmed. GSR noted the same. No dissent was recorded.

The Corporation was asked to **APPROVE** the appointment of:

- Rhys Davies
- Robert Holmes,

as Independent Governors to the Corporation on a three-year term of office and appointment to the Curriculum, Quality and Enhancement Committee (**C&QE**), subject to satisfactory completion of a one-year probationary review and all pre-appointment checks. It was noted that Rhys Davies had previously validated the College's Further Education Self-Assessment Report as part of an external process. It was confirmed that all conflicts of interest had been declared and Rhys will undertake no further professional work for the College in that capacity.

The Corporation was **FURTHER** asked to **APPROVE** the appointment of Elaine Agar as a Co-Opted Governor to C&QE with a view to appointing Elaine as a full Independent Governor of the Corporation at the end of August 2026 when a vacancy became available. The proposed appointment also remains subject to satisfactory completion of all pre-appointment checks.

The Corporation acknowledged that the amended approach was necessary to ensure the timely strengthening of skills and expertise of C&QE. **Governors involved on in the recruitment process, noted that high-quality candidates had applied - who will add significant value to the Corporation and its Committees. A Governor continued to explain that C&QE continued to look to recruit a candidate/co-opted governor with strong Higher Education expertise to support the HE Recovery Strategy and a targeted recruitment advert detailing the skill set (including a strong understanding of OFSTED's Conditions of Registration) would be circulated.**

The Corporation **APPROVED** the appointment of Rhys Davies, Robert Holmes and Elaine Agar; noting a delegation of authority to the DG to commence Terms of Office once all pre-appointment checks had been received and were satisfactorily completed.

## 2 **Declarations of Interest**

*(the Register of Interest: Corporation Members, Executive and Director of Governance, was included in the Meeting Pack).*

### 2.1 **Consider and declare, as required, amendments to the Register of Interest**

Danny Metters: update to Register of Interest: appointed as a board member for the Hull & East Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Board.

### 2.2 **Consider and declare conflicts of interest to items arising as part of the evening's business**

Nothing raised

*Items were taken out of order.*

*Richard Lewis (RSM) entered the Meeting: 5:45pm*

## **Committee Reporting**

### 4 **Audit Committee Meeting**

#### 4.1 **Committee Minutes and Chairs Summary for the Meeting held on 25 November 2025**

*(The Non-Confidential Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 25 November 2025 were included in the Meeting Pack)*

The Corporation **RECEIVED** and **ACCEPTED** the Committee Minutes from the Committee Meeting.

The Chair of the Audit Committee (**Audit Chair**) provided an overview of the Meeting as detailed in the Chair's Summary, summarising key items that had been addressed.

## 4.2 Annual Report of the Audit Committee and Annual Accounts and Financial Statements

(The following items were included in the Meeting Pack: Audit Committee Annual Report 2024/25; Regularity self-assessment questionnaire (2024 to 2025); Management Letter; Report And Unaudited Financial Statements Bishop Burton Farm Limited, Report And Unaudited Financial Statements Bishop Burton Riseholme Limited; Report And Unaudited Financial Statements Bishop Burton Farm Enterprises Limited; Bishop Burton College: Report And Financial Statements For The Year Ended 31 July 2025)

### Audit Committee's Annual Report

The Audit Chair provided a summary overview of the Audit Committee's Annual Report. The Corporation was advised that the Committee had concluded that the College had an adequate and effective framework for governance, risk management and control and that it had fulfilled its statutory responsibilities regarding the efficient use of resources, solvency and the safeguarding of assets. The recommendations and conclusions of the Audit Committee were outlined to the Corporation. The Corporation **RECEIVED** and **ACCEPTED** the Audit Committee's conclusion and recommendations into its record in advance of considering the Annual Accounts and Financial Statements and Management Letter.

RSM presented the final Audit Findings Report, as required by the DfE, and confirmed an anticipated unqualified, unmodified opinion on both the regularity audit and the true and fair view of the College and subsidiary financial statements - the highest level of assurance available.

Key points noted by RSM, included:

- **Income Recognition:** testing had identified minor ILR errors, which were corrected prior to submission. A small clawback of £12,000 was confirmed by the DfE and had been provided for in the financial statements; however, an over-provision of £100,000 remained as an unadjusted item, which is not material. RSM commended the positive results achieved on the DfE Funding Assurance Audit
- **Controls and Compliance:** minor housekeeping and data quality points were identified and accepted by management along with one control point
- **Unadjusted Items:** RSM drew the Corporation's attention to unadjusted, immaterial items in the Financial Statements
- **Significant Risk Areas:** RSM confirmed that, in addition to income testing, mandatory testing was performed on significant risk areas and key controls and confirmed all transactions reviewed were approved in line with College procedures. Testing on regularity found no evidence of non-compliance with DfE Managing Public Money rules or the College Financial Handbook. One termination payment processed in August related to a July transaction was verified as compliant with the Managing Public Money rules but has not been accounted for
- **Pensions:** disclosures were appropriate and in line with actuarial valuations
- **Going Concern:** no material uncertainty exists. Covenant breaches anticipated last year have not materialised due to changes implemented and RSM concurred with the Corporation's conclusions that forecasts support a going concern position, through to July 2027
- **New Disclosure:** RSM drew the Corporation's attention to Note 26 in the Financial Statements Reports regarding 16–19 bursary funding

The CFO confirmed that the audit findings had been discussed at both the Audit Committee (**Audit**) and the Finance & Resources Committee (**F&R**). Since the latter meeting, there has been one minor change relating to a Third-Party Transaction. This adjustment of £2,300 does not represent a material change to the financial statements.

On the recommendation of the Audit Committee, the Corporation:

- **APPROVED** the content of the Regularity Audit Self-Assessment Questionnaire
- **APPROVED** the Members' Report and Financial Statements including the Regularity Audit Report
- **APPROVED** the Management Letter on Financial Statements including Final Regularity Audit
- **APPROVED** the Financial Statements of the College's Subsidiary Companies

RSM noted the requirement to submit signed accounts to the DfE by 31 December.

*RSM left the Meeting*

#### 4.3 Risk Management

*(The Executive Summary Reports entitled the Annual Risk Management Report – 2024-25 and its ancillary document along with the High-Level Risk Register 2025/26 and High-Level Risk Management Action Plan 2025/26 were included in the Meeting Pack)*

##### **Risk Management Report, Risk Management Policy and Risk Management Strategy**

The Audit Chair confirmed that the Risk Management Report, Risk Management Policy and Risk Management Strategy had been reviewed and scrutinised by the Committee and were recommended to the Corporation. The Audit Chair added however that the Committee had identified a need to determine and measure the Corporation's "risk appetite", as part of the Risk Management Framework. The CFO confirmed that it had been discussed by the Executive Team and guidance had been sought from RSM. An update is to be provided ahead of the next Audit Committee Meeting.

The Corporation on the recommendation of the Committee:

- **RECEIVED** the Risk Management Annual Report
- **APPROVED** the Risk Management Policy and Risk Management Strategy; noting its recommendation for the inclusion of a risk appetite

**ACTION: CFO to update the Audit Committee on progress in defining the Corporation's risk appetite, incorporating guidance from RSM and the Executive Team's discussions, prior to the next meeting**

##### **Risk Register and High-Level Risk Register Action Plan**

The CFO confirmed that there have been no changes to the Risk Register or associated action plans since the Audit Committee meeting. The Corporation considered the documents provided and **APPROVED** the amendments made to the Risk Register and the High-Level Risk Register Action Plan.

#### 4.4 Partnership Arrangements

*(The Executive Summary Report entitled Partnership Arrangements and Reporting and ancillary reporting were provided in the Meeting Pack)*

The Audit Chair updated the Corporation on progress in developing a reporting framework to document and manage the approval of College partnership arrangements. Work is underway to create a comprehensive register covering partnerships linked to work experience, apprenticeships and contractual agreements, with appropriate categorisation for approval or acknowledgement by the Corporation. It was noted that current Financial Regulations require Corporation approval for all partnerships, which is impractical. Following discussion, it was agreed that the wording should be revised to clarify that approval will apply only to significant, strategic, or high-risk partnerships, defined by financial thresholds and/or reputational risk. This work is to be taken forward with the Audit Committee and revised wording presented to the Corporation for approval in due course. The Corporation acknowledged the importance of partnership arrangements for strategic value, student experience, and risk management. The Audit Chair emphasised the proposed approach was not to restrict operational activity but to ensure the Corporation remains fully aware of potential risks associated with partnerships including both financial exposure and reputational damage in the event of partnership failure. **The Corporation Chair stressed the need to understand the value created by partnerships for the College and welcomed the development of clear criteria for determining which partnerships require Corporation approval. The oversight of the processes in place for approving workplace arrangements was acknowledged as was the challenges of managing external environments for students.** The Principal reported on progress toward consolidating an Annual Partnerships Report, noting the areas for inclusion and confirming that the report will also demonstrate the impact of these partnerships on the College.

**ACTION: wording in the Financial Regulations to be amended to explicitly define what types of partnerships require Corporation approval such as those that are strategic, high-risk or financially significant defined with clear financial and reputational thresholds**

The Corporation **NOTED** the update.

#### 4.5 Re-Tendering Specifications for the External Auditing Service

*(The Executive Summary Report entitled "Re-Tendering Specifications for the External Auditing Service and ancillary reporting were provided in the Meeting Pack)*

The Audit Chair reported that, following discussion at the Audit Committee Meeting, it had been resolved the evaluation criteria for the External Auditor tender would be weighted at 60% for performance and quality and 40% for cost. Discussion was undertaken and the Corporation agreed with the approach and endorsed the specification as now presented. No further questions were raised and the Corporation **APPROVED** the Retendering Specification.

#### 4.6 **DFE Letter re College Financial Forecasting Return 2025 to 2027 and Governor Dashboard**

*(The DfE Letter to the College regarding "Bishop Burton College, College Financial Forecasting Return 2025 to 2027" was including in the Meeting Pack")*

The Audit Chair reported that commentary had been including regarding an insufficient level of detail being included in the commentary accompanying the CFFR. The CFO advised that the issue was raised at a recent meeting with the DfE and the DfE clarified that the concern was primarily linked to the previous year's deficit.

The CFO noted, in addition, that the individuals at DfE who had reviewed the submission were not the same as those engaged in prior discussions with the College, which had led to some surprise at the DfE and contributed to the comments raised. The DfE had confirmed that, although not a significant issue, they would be monitoring the College more closely and had requested quarterly accounts to ensure transparency and avoid surprises.

The Principal added that the consensus at the meeting with the DfE was that the level of detail discussed at Corporation and Committee meetings had not been fully reflected in the CFFR submitted to the DfE. As a result, the central DfE Team did not have the same narrative context as local representatives. To provide assurance, the Principal confirmed that quarterly management accounts would be shared with the DfE to demonstrate progress toward achieving a surplus position. The Principal summarised the previous financial trajectory, noting the original forecast deficit of £500,000 for 2023/24 (which was the maximum permitted under a bank loan covenant) had subsequently increased to £1.2m before reducing to £800,000 through mitigating actions.

**The Corporation noted the importance of providing a more comprehensive narrative in future submissions to reflect actions taken and progress toward a surplus position.** The CFO highlighted that the October Management Accounts, presented to the Corporation, would now also be shared with the DfE following Corporation approval adding that they would not be shared with the DfE until approved by Corporation.

The CFO reported that the financial dashboard appended to the DfE, had been reviewed in detail, page by page, at F&R.

### 3 **Minutes and Actions Arising**

*(Non-Confidential Minutes and the Action Summary were included in the Meeting Pack and Restricted Confidential Minutes were included in the Restricted Confidential Meeting Pack)*

#### 3.1 **Corporation Minutes: 23 October 2025**

**Non Confidential Minutes:** The DG drew the Corporation's attention to the minor amendments which needed to be included on the draft Corporation Minutes before they were approved. Subject to the amendment being made the Corporation **APPROVED** the Minutes as a true and accurate record of the Meeting.

**ACTION: DG to add in the times when the Student Governors left the Corporation Meeting.**

**Restricted Confidential Minutes:** The Minutes were taken as read and were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record of the Meeting.

#### 3.2 **Actions Arising**

**Action Point 5.1:** the DG noted that the Residential Accommodation Training had not yet taken place and had been discussed at C&QE, who were recommending the training be scheduled and completed before the end of the current academic year.

**ACTION: DG to schedule and ensure completion of Residential Accommodation Training for the C&QE Governors before the end of the current academic year**

**Action Point 7.6:** an update was provided; the VPRBD is to meet with Susan Hamer, Adam Milner and Emma Middleton to discuss the Commercial and Enterprise Strategy on 7 January 2025.

#### 4 **Audit Committee Meeting**

*(Items taken out of order)*

#### 5 **Curriculum and Quality Enhancement Committee (C&QE) Meeting**

##### 5.1 **Committee Minutes**

*(The Minutes from the Curriculum and Quality Enhancement Committee Meeting held on 14 October 2025 was included in the Agenda Pack)*

##### **14 October 2025: Non-Confidential and Confidential Minutes of the Curriculum and Quality Enhancement Committee Meeting**

The Corporation noted a verbal update had been provided at its previous meeting of and **ACCEPTED** the Minutes into its record.

##### **2 December 2025: Non-Confidential Minutes of the Special Curriculum and Quality Enhancement Committee**

The C&QE Chair provided a verbal update to the Corporation as detailed under Minute 5.2.

##### 5.2 **Higher Education: Self Evaluation Document and Quality Improvement Plan**

*(The Executive Summary Report entitled "HE Self-Evaluation Document 2024-25 and Quality Improvement Plan 25-26" and associated papers were included in the Meeting Pack)*

The C&QE Chair reported that a Special Meeting C&QE Meeting had been held on 1 December to review the Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document (**HE SED**) and Quality Improvement Plan (**HE QIP**). The introduction of this new approach had enabled enhanced scrutiny and support for key HE related, documents. The C&QE Chair highlighted that the HE SED had significantly improved in clarity, conciseness and structure, making it easier to interpret while retaining comprehensive supporting data. Positive outcomes were noted, including strong National Student Survey results, particularly in teaching, learning, and assessment quality and strong completion rates approaching 90%, which align with sector benchmarks. The Chair outlined areas requiring improvement, notably continuation rates between Level 4 and Level 5 and internal progression from FE to HE, which remain below target and are reflected on the Risk Register. The C&QE Chair stressed the need for better collaboration between FE and HE teams to improve progression pathways. The Chair commended the constructive challenge provided by the Student Governors during the Meeting, particularly around employability and student support, which had informed updates to the HE QIP. The C&QE Chair explained that the Committee had recommended clearer accountability within the HE QIP with named individuals responsible for actions rather than generic references to teams and requested inclusion of defined milestones and timelines. It was noted that the Director of HE had acknowledged these recommendations and confirmed amendments would be made.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the HESED and HEQIP, subject to incorporation of appropriate amendments made in line with the Committee's feedback.

The Chair also confirmed that minor updates to the Academic Misconduct Policy were reviewed, with wording changes made to align with awarding body requirements, and noted that development of an AI policy is underway to complement this

#### 6 **Finance & Resources Committee Meeting**

##### 6.1 **Committee Minutes and Chairs Summary**

The F&R Chair provided a verbal as detailed in Minutes 6.2 and 6.3.

##### 6.2 **Financial Management Report & Management Accounts**

*(The Executive Summaries entitled "Update on the Financial Forecast" and "Management Accounts – October 2025" along with ancillary papers were included in the Meeting Pack)*

The F&R Chair provided a verbal update on the Meeting held on 2 December. The F&R Chair noted that November accounts were not yet finalised for publication but requested the CFO to advise of any material since October as part of the evening's business. The F&R Chair referred to the new financial dashboard, which uses RAG status indicators to present key financial metrics in a clear and accessible format.

The F&R Chair introduced the two-year financial forecast, reminding Governors that the original budget for 2025/26 projected a £658k surplus which was subsequently revised down to £181k at the last Corporation meeting due to factors including lower HE recruitment, clawback on T Level funding and reduced residential and catering income linked to HE. The CFO explained that at the last Corporation Meeting – a surplus position of £181k for 2025/26 had been forecasted which had now improved to £234k. The CFO emphasised that the forecasts were based on assumptions within the Finance Improvement Plan, which remained subject to change. The CFO advised that the year-end position for 2025/26 had improved primarily due to two factors:

- (i) a reduction in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) employer contribution rate, which will generate a saving of approximately £112k in the current year; and
- (ii) the release of £88k following a lower than anticipated clawback from the DfE Funding Assurance Audit; ultimately increasing November's forecasted surplus to £434k.

The Principal emphasised that the 2025/26-year end position had to be a break-even position; to avoid breaching the Bank Loan Covenants.

The CFO reported that the forecast for 2026/27 currently indicates a £621k surplus, reduced from the original £1m assumption due to lower HE recruitment and associated impacts on residential and catering income. The forecast assumes and includes a 2% staff pay award and efficiency measures. The CFO highlighted however that the planned reduction in the LGPS employer contribution rate to 14% from April 2026 will generate savings of over £440k, and decisions would need to be made on how much of that saving should be retained to strengthen the College's surplus position. The CFO reiterated the importance of achieving a surplus in 2026/27 to comply with banking covenants and confirmed that retaining the full-year effect of the LGPS rate reduction would improve financial resilience in future years.

### **Management Accounts**

The CFO confirmed that the management accounts reflect the current financial position and include detailed variance analysis. The CFO also reported the introduction of a new financial dashboard incorporating RAG status indicators for key metrics, which was positively received by F&R.

Discussion was undertaken

**A Governor challenged the Executive Team on the importance of messaging around the College's financial position. The Governor noted that during the previous deficit year, communication had negatively impacted staff morale and potentially productivity. While acknowledging the improvement to a surplus position, the Governor stressed that messaging should recognise staff efforts in delivering efficiencies and cost savings, rather than focusing on the surplus being less than originally forecast. The Governor emphasised that staff had contributed significantly to achieving financial stability and should feel that their efforts have paid off. The Executive Team was asked to ensure that future communications are positive, clear, and carefully managed to maintain morale and engagement.**

The Principal responded by acknowledging the importance of managing messaging around the College's financial position and agreed that communications must be positive and transparent. The Principal noted, however, that there also needed to be an element of realism, as the College is not achieving the level of surplus originally forecast. The Principal confirmed that messaging had already been addressed through recent all-staff briefings, which celebrated successes to date, provided updates on recruitment performance and explained the impact of underachievement in HE recruitment and related residential income. The Principal outlined that the messaging had also included actions being taken to address these challenges, such as the HE Recovery Strategy, diversification of income streams through commercial and enterprise activity and growth in FE provision. While recognising the need to celebrate progress, the Principal stressed that staff must also understand the financial

context, including why pay awards remain limited compared to other colleges, and how non-pay benefits were being considered. The Principal confirmed that transparency and honesty will remain central to communications. **Feedback was provided from a staff perspective; noting that the consensus was that honesty and transparency were appreciated however they would continue to ask questions based on their day-to-day perceptions and experiences on campus**

*Discussion continued*

**The Board discussed how financial and performance information is communicated to staff and its impact on engagement. Key points raised included:**

- **A Governor highlighted concerns about the term “HE Recovery Strategy”, noting that “recovery” implies fixing issues rather than driving a bold, future-focused strategy for the next three to five years. It was suggested that a more ambitious approach may require significant investment, potentially in the region of £500k or more, to develop a fully funded FE and HE strategy which aligned to the College’s longer term vision.**
- **Another Governor observed that the College was operating under very tight financial constraints, which were not sustainable in the long term. While the reported surplus reflected cost savings, these were largely due to deferred expenditure, such as property repairs, which would need to be addressed in future budgets. Clear communication of this context to staff was considered essential.**
- **A Governor suggested that future KPI analysis should include consideration of staff workload, acknowledging that reductions in staffing in some areas may have increased pressures elsewhere. Cost-saving measures should not result in disproportionate workload expectations and should be monitored.**
- **A Governor queried whether staff fully understand what financial figures mean and how they relate to their own roles, suggesting that clearer alignment between College targets and personal objectives could improve engagement.**

**The Chair summarised the discussion, noting that the overriding principle was to understand the actual impact of a surplus or adverse financial position on individuals in their daily working lives. The Chair emphasised that clear and frequently updated messaging around this impact was critical. The Chair also proposed that elements such as the naming of the “HE Recovery Strategy” be considered by the Curriculum & Quality Enhancement Committee**

The Principal reaffirmed the College’s commitment to visibility and transparency, noting that the Executive and Senior Management Teams regularly hold open forums, including ‘Buster Sessions,’ which enable staff to engage in open discussions on finance, KPIs, recruitment, and the implications of not meeting targets. The Principal also highlighted the role of the active Staff Council in raising questions on progress against strategic priorities and exploring how staff can contribute to achieving them.

The Principal stressed the importance of realism when discussing financial health, acknowledging the distinction between ‘Requires Improvement,’ ‘Good,’ and ‘Outstanding.’ While the College currently holds good reserves, it was noted that a loss of £800,000 in the previous year had been covered by reserves, which would not be sustainable without continued growth.

The Principal clarified that terminology such as “HE Recovery Strategy” reflected the previous “Finance Recovery Strategy”, which was appropriate at the time, but agreed that language should now reflect the current position. The Principal concluded by reaffirming that, while the College remains ambitious, its Higher Education position for 2025/26 is significantly different from six years ago, and transparent communication will remain a priority to ensure staff understanding and engagement.

The Principal confirmed that College-level KPIs are cascaded into departmental and personal objectives linked to appraisals, ensuring staff understand how their contribution supports overall goals. For example, recruitment targets are broken down by department, and teams are already working towards application targets for the next academic year.

It was noted that the January staff event will include a Principal's presentation on financial performance and strategic priorities, followed by team workshops to explore how targets cascade to individual roles and how teams can work more effectively. The afternoon will focus on technology and AI workshops to support workload

**Governors agreed that communication must remain clear, relevant, and contextualised so staff understand not only College-wide objectives but also what these mean for them personally and it was requested that feedback be gathered through the upcoming employee survey provide the Governors with a clearer understanding and assurance that the messages were pitched correctly and permeated, effectively, to all staff.**

The Corporation considered and **APPROVED** the revised two-year financial forecast and **ACCEPTED** the Management Accounts into its record.

#### **ACTIONS:**

- **C&QE Committee to consider the terminology used and messaging associated with the HE Recover Strategy**
- **Staff Voice feedback to be gathered through surveying employees to provide Governors with a clearer understanding of the perceptions of employees and assurance that the messaging was pitched correctly and permeated, effectively, to all staff**

The F&R Chair provided a brief summary of the remaining items discussed noting the College's Financial Health remains "Good" for 2025/26. The Financial Recovery Strategy continues to evolve as a live document, with no significant changes since the last review. No major updates were noted for the Estates Strategy. A recovery plan for the commercial equine provision is in development and several enterprise business cases are expected for review in the spring. The recent appointment of a new Director of Marketing was highlighted as a key development. Reports on sustainability, ICT, People and Culture, Workforce, and HR were reviewed in detail, with no significant issues raised, though Governors were encouraged to review these for important insights.

#### **Executive Summary Dashboard**

The Principal the Corporation's attention to the Executive Summary Dashboard, a one-page document featuring key financial indicators with visual markers (upward, downward, and neutral arrows). The dashboard is intended to simplify complex financial information, support wider conversations, and provide assurance for those less familiar with detailed management accounts. It will also be used with all budget holders to strengthen understanding of budget management, ownership, and spend. Governors were invited to provide feedback after the meeting on how the dashboard could be enhanced for clarity and engagement. **The Corporation noted that this format will continue to be presented at both F&R and Corporation Meetings.**

### **6.3 Annual Reports**

*(The following Annual Reports were provided in the Meeting Pack)*

The Corporation **NOTED** and **RECEIVED** the following Annual Reports:

- Bishop Burton Transport
- Sponsorship of Events, Platforms and People
- Gifts and Hospitality

The F&R Chair reported that Transport was high-spend area for the Corporation with multiple moving parts; adding that it had requested a mid-year update to monitor progress and expenditure.

### **7 Policies**

*(All policies detailed were included in the Meeting Pack)*

The Corporation **APPROVED** the following Policies on the recommendation of the Committees:

- HE Academic Misconduct Policy
- Risk Management Policy (taken at Agenda Item 5.5)

- Conflict of Interest Policy – Relevant Staff (7.29)
- Conflict of Interest Policy – Governors (*for information – to be provided to GSR Committee*) (5.01)
- Grievance Policy (7.09)
- Treasury Management Policy (2.18)
- Environmental And Sustainability Policy (2.08)

**ACTION: DG to add the Conflict-of-Interest Policy - Governors on to the next GSR Committee Meeting**

*The Corporation adjourned for a short refreshment break.*

*The Meeting reconvened*

## 8 Principal's Update

The Principal provided a PowerPoint Presentation; saved in the record as Tabled Item 1. Key Points outlined, included:

- **Celebrations and Achievements:** the Principal reported that the recent graduation ceremony celebrated 260 students, with 97% achieving positive destinations in Further and Higher Education. The College received an Outstanding rating for its residential provision following the OFSTED Care Standards Inspection and a press release has been issued. The College was highly commended at the Green Gown Awards for sustainability initiatives, including the Farm Sustainability Strategy. The College also successfully retained its Matrix IEG accreditation for Careers Guidance. Staff recognition initiatives, such as Employee of the Month awards, have been introduced across campuses and is being well received and celebrations of individual members of staff, nominated for awards, were highlighted.

The Principal moved on to key points that would be raised as part of Item 9 (KPIs and Monitoring Framework).

- **Apprenticeships:** the College has shifted its strategy to focus on higher-value standards, resulting in fewer starts but improved income potential and more effective national employer link. A national land-based contract is currently under negotiation, which could significantly impact income and student numbers. The Principal added that a successful apprenticeship model had been identified; noting the College was looking to capitalising on this including and had rolled out of an arboriculture apprenticeship.
- **Recruitment and Enrolment:** FE enrolments remain above allocation. Withdrawals have been processed for reasons including transfers to other institutions, personal circumstances, and employment. A detailed analysis of the reasons for student withdrawals was presented and it was agreed that further investigation will be undertaken to understand why students have transferred to other providers. The College's current focus is on student retention and ensuring a high-quality learner experience. HE applications are down by 15% however, targeted marketing campaigns are in progress to address this trend. Despite the decline in applications, HE recruitment within the College remains relatively stable.

Governors received updates on the following key areas across the both campuses:

- Student Recruitment Update as at the Six-Week Census
- Withdrawal Comparisons
- In-Year Recruitment Updates

The VPRBD went on to provide an update on the work undertaken to strengthen recruitment processes and improve conversion rates from initial engagement to enrolment. Detailed analysis of historical data has identified the number of applications typically required to achieve enrolment targets. This insight is now being used to set clear targets for open day attendance based on established conversion ratios, ensuring the College remains fully aware of the recruitment funnel and opportunities to improve conversion at each stage. The VPRBD summarised key actions and initiatives that had been put in place:

- **Conversion Analysis:** historical trends have now been mapped to understand the relationship between open day attendance, applications, and enrolments; informing target-setting and marketing priorities
- **Marketing Approaches:** open days remain a critical element of the recruitment strategy and additional emphasis is being placed on increasing attendance and engagement

- **Targeted Campaigns:** in line with the College's Growth Strategy, national campaigns are being delivered within five priority regions. These campaigns utilise varied media channels and are supported by enhanced tracking mechanisms to measure impact and inform future rollouts
- **Digital Tools and Cost Efficiency:** it was acknowledged that while expanding geographical reach can be costly, the use of digital platforms was allowing for targeted region specific and cost-effective engagement which provided an analysis of the impact of the marketing for future development
- **Campus Experience:** to strengthen the College's position as a destination of choice, plans are in place to showcase specialist equipment across campuses, ensuring all prospective students and visitors experience the full breadth of facilities available to support and showcase the College

The VPRBD summarised that the approach was increasingly data-driven. Governors welcomed the update; noting the alignment of marketing activity with the College's strategic objectives.

- **Attendance:** attendance is currently at 86.9%, against a target of 88%. The Principal explained that an action plan was in place to improve attendance, focusing on engagement between Group Tutors and Maths and English with targeted interventions for individual students also. **A Governor noted the College was below its KPI; adding that this was unlikely to recover – emphasising the impact and correlation between attendance and retention**
- **Political and Policy Landscape:** the Principal provided an overview of the current political and devolution context, highlighting significant complexity across combined authorities with differing priorities, particularly around adult skills investment. The College continues to influence the skills agenda locally and nationally through active engagement and advocacy for land-based education. In Hull & East Yorkshire, proposals for subsidised post-16 transport could help offset the College's £1.2m annual transport cost. In Lincolnshire, more limited consultation on the Skills Agenda was noted alongside proposals to defund ESOL and restrict adult funding based on residency requirements. The Principal noted that the most immediate impact will be the transfer of adult skills funding from central government to combined authorities and emphasised that the Skills Agenda must be understood as broader than adult skills alone.
- **Post-16 White Paper,** the Principal reported on the implications of the Post-16 White Paper, noting that while it presents opportunities, significant risks remain due to the pace of change and lack of clarity. The Principal explained that there was currently no defined articulation route from Level 1 to Level 6 with details on delivery models, subject content and progression pathways - unknown. The consultation closes on **12 January 2026**.

Key points highlighted for the Corporations awareness, were:

- the defunding some programmes from July 2026, with no clear alternatives identified which is impact the College's GFE provision
- the replacement of Level 3 qualifications (outside T Levels and A Levels) with **V Levels**, alongside a full review of Level 1–2 provision
- introduction of new progression routes, including two-year Level 2 programmes leading to employment and one-year Level 2 programmes progressing to Level 3
- land-based provision is not currently differentiated from general further education in the proposals. If there is an equalising of funding weightings for land-based programmes, such as Animal, this could result in a £2.2m reduction for the College. There is also uncertainty around UCAS alignment for V Levels, which may impact progression to HE. The Principal added that the College was actively lobbying through the Association of Colleges and Landex to influence policy and ensure recognition of land-based provision.

Discussion was undertaken and the Corporation noted the update.

## 9 KPIs and Monitoring Framework

*(The Executive Summary Report entitled KPI Summary and ancillary paperwork was provided in the Meeting Pack)*

The VPRBD provided an update on the KPI Monitoring Framework and current performance position. Key points noted, included :

- **FE Retention:** is tracking ahead of the comparable data for the same point, in time, last year (99%)
- **Apprenticeship Achievement:** is positive - currently at 55.8% and best case 81.6% against a target of 73%
- **FE Recruitment:** is above allocation for 2025/26
- **2026/27 FE 16-18 Applications:** are tracking ahead of comparable data for the same point, in time, last year

- **2026/27 HE Applications:** require close monitoring and are tracking just below target
- **Attendance:** FE attendance is **86.9%** against a target of **88%**. Improvement actions are being led by Directors and Heads of Area
- **Financial KPIs:** despite challenges, the College is broadly on track against key measures, including cash days and operating surplus
- **Workforce KPIs:** positive progress noted, although PDR completion is currently 89% against a 100% target. Actions are in place to achieve full compliance
- **Staff Utilisation:** is currently above planned levels due to timetable adjustments; although is expected to normalise in Term 2
- **Health & Safety:** the RIDDOR KPI remains red due to the three-year rolling measure

**A Governor raised concern regarding FE attendance at 86.9% against an all-year target of 88%. It was put forward that attendance would not recover to the annual KPI position. The Governor then referred to the retention KPI of 99%; noting this would be challenging particularly given the risk of further drop-off after Christmas. Assurance was sought on actions being taken to address attendance and maintain engagement. Governors also queried how attendance compared across the Colleges two campuses.**

The Executive Team acknowledged the concern and confirmed that attendance remains a priority KPI. Actions in place were summarised, as follow:

- completion of all registers before the end of term to identify students at risk of non-return in January
- early engagement of students in their studies which would follow after the Christmas Break
- targeted interventions for individuals with poor attendance including one-to-one support, counselling and enrichment activities
- ongoing benchmarking against other colleges and using improved data tools to drill down by curriculum area
- adjustments to timetabling and contextualised delivery of Maths and English to improve engagement
- operational changes including security staff engaging with students during the day to support wellbeing and retention

The Principal went on to explain that the College was looking to monitor the distance travelled in student attendance by comparing attendance levels at their previous schools or provisions with progress achieved at the College. It was noted that even a single missed day can have a significant impact due to timetabling, and the importance of ensuring students understand this was emphasised.

The Corporation **NOTED** the updates provided and **RESOLVED** that attendance would be a key focus and discussion at the next C&QE Meeting and moving forward.

**ACTION: Executive Team to provide an update on attendance recovery and impact of interventions at for the next Curriculum, Quality and Enhancement Commitment.**

## 10 Corporation Annual Self-Assessment, Governance Quality Improvement Plan & KPI Update

*(The Executive Summary Reports entitled “Corporation Annual Self-Assessment, Governance Quality Improvement Plan” and “Corporation: Key Performance Indicators” and ancillary papers was provided in the Meeting Pack. The papers were supported with a PowerPoint Presentation: Corporation Self Assessment 2025 which was tabled on the evening (Tabled Item 2)*

The DG and Corporation Chair presented an overview of the Annual Governance Self-Assessment process, outlining the updated framework, including governor self-reflection, board effectiveness review and mapping against AoC principles. Key points included progress on external benchmarking, committee self-assessments and actions arising from the 2023 External Board Review and Internal Audit. Plans were highlighted to digitalise governance data for greater efficiency and real-time benchmarking, alongside improvements to governor training, support, and development. The DG emphasised the importance of GSR taking ownership of the Governance Quality Improvement Plan; noting collaboratively working with herself and the Principal/ Executive Team would ensure that findings identified in the Self-Assessment, were aligned with current practice owing to the changes in operational and strategic leadership. Committee Chairs were reminded of their role in owning their Committee’s business and ensuring effective feedback to the Corporation to strengthen triangulation and drive strategic priorities. **The Corporation also discussed the volume and format of board papers, noting the size of recent**

**meeting packs which was impacting governance effectiveness and strategic discussion.** Governors suggested introducing executive summaries for committee reports with links to full documentation to enable more focused debate and decision-making. The DG and Chair noted that works had been undertaken to assist with this; noting the introduction of Chair’s Summary Report and Executive Summary Report already in place to support Governor’s overview of salient points whilst providing the access to the detail – should they wish to review it. However, it was noted that this messaging had clearly not been articulated clear enough and will form part of a focus on the Governance Improvement Plan

**ACTION: GSR to review the messaging, communication and requirements of Corporation Members upon receipt of the Meeting Pack and streamline reporting to increase strategic discussion**

The Corporation **RECEIVED** and **APPROVED** the Corporation Self-Assessment and Governance Quality Improvement Plan and **UPDATES** to the Key Performance Indicators were taken as read.

**11 Annual Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Report 2024/25**

*(The Executive Summary entitled “Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report 2024/25” and ancillary papers were included in the Meeting Pack)*

The VPGPP presented an update on EDI data collection and analysis. Significant progress has been made in improving the quality and completeness of Student EDI data, enabling mapping against the governor profile for the first time. The EDI analysis on a whole has highlighted some achievement gaps and areas for further development, which will inform future planning. The VPGPP noted that while the current governor profile broadly reflects the community served by the College, there is scope to strengthen diversity further. **Governors discussed the importance of representation and agreed that recruitment will continue to be based on merit and skills gaps, but with enhanced outreach strategies to attract candidates from underrepresented groups.**

**ACTION: DG to review governor recruitment process to ensure it is inclusive**

**The Corporation also reviewed sector benchmarking data and queried whether land-based specific workforce diversity comparisons were available.** The VPGPP confirmed that data did exist but the Principal is to raise this with Landex to explore the feasibility of introducing a dedicated data collection point for land-based colleges, similar to the health and safety benchmarking currently in place.

**ACTION: Principal to liaise with Landex about creating EDI benchmarks for a landbased specific workforce**

It was reported that the EDI Annual Report would be provided to C&QE for initial scrutiny in 2026/27 before recommendation to the Corporation. The DG is to update the Annual Cycle of Business.

The Corporation **RECEIVED** the EDI Annual Report

**ACTIONS:**

- **GSR to review governor recruitment outreach strategies to strengthen diversity and report back to the Corporation**
- **DG to update the Annual Cycle of Business to ensure the Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report is provided to C&QE for scrutiny in advance of being provided to Corporation**
- **Principal to raise the potential for land-based workforce diversity benchmarking with Landex and provide an update at a future meeting**

*The following people left the meeting: Isaac Blakey, Ivy Knowles, Laura Woodhouse, Kate Calvert, Stephen Kelly, Helen Wooldridge, Beth Curtis.*

**12 Any other Urgent Business**

*This part of the Meeting was taken as confidential*

There being no further business the Meeting closed.

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_



Date

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