



**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON 22 OCTOBER 2025 AT 4.00 PM
IN T108, THE BOARD ROOM, THE ROUNDHOUSE**

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MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON 22 OCTOBER 2025 AT 4.00 PM IN T108, THE BOARD ROOM, THE ROUNDHOUSE

Present: Andrew Cochrane (Chair), Richard Blackmore, Alan Brady, Nikol Daskalova, Ranjit Singh Dol, Andrew Dymond, Stuart Ellis, Guy Hodgkinson, Martyn Marples, Jane McNeil, Jill Matthews, Mandie Stravino. Anju Virdee

In attendance: Jo Clifford, Aaron Denton, Heather Kelly, Melanie Lanser, Brian Malyan (Minute No. 05/25-26 only), Jon Collins (Minute No 07/25-26 only) Rose Matthews (Clerk to the Corporation)

PART ONE - GENERAL MINUTES

01/25-26 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair introduced Nikol Daskalova, the new Student Governor and Guy Hodgkinson, the new Staff Governor to the meeting and introductions took place.

Apologies for absence were received from Sue Bradley.

Jill Matthews and Stuart Ellis would be joining a little later.

02/25-26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, CONFIRMATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND QUORUM

All members were eligible, the meeting was quorate and there were no new declarations.

03/25-26 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 10 JULY 2025

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2025 were formally approved as a true and accurate record.

04/25-26 MATTERS ARISING

69/24-25 The action for the Director of Health and Safety to provide internal targets and benchmarking in future H&S reports was carried over to the next meeting when the next report would be presented.

DHS 11/12/25

05/25-26 EXTERNAL POLICY

The Chief Executive delivered a presentation on policy announcements since the last meeting in July, highlighting education policy changes, funding allocations and their implications for the College.

The presentation included an overview on the Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper which had been published earlier in the week, highlighting the introduction of V levels, auto enrolment and the challenges it presented, the youth guarantee, English and maths stepping stone qualification, level 2 reform, adult education review, the skills passport.

The Chair said the Clerk would be sharing the White Paper with all members and recommended they read it.

Clerk 23/10/25

RSG asked if there was any indication of what it would look like for those young people without a study plan that would be guaranteed a place and how they are reached. It was pointed out nationally around 1m sit in that group and there are significant volumes in the city and wider county, it will be a significant number. **He went onto ask if the Group were confident they had the data available and how much confidence could they put in that.** The Group were able to access the data of those coming out of school and for the youth guarantee, but had no indication of those already in the Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

The Vice Chair asked if there was any positivity about the overall direction of travel for FE. The team discussed how they were remaining objective, they discussed the significant capacity challenges this presented, as the college is already at its funding and physical limits, and highlighted the need for targeted investment and expansion of entry-level and exploratory programmes. The group discussed the challenges of supporting disadvantaged students and the increased social and pastoral responsibilities placed on colleges.

It was also note the Group had been part of a 16 college study on English and maths identified to share best practice and 15 out of those follow the GCSE route as DCG does and the Group can show progress on the point scores, so it was surprising to see this included in the report.

RESOLVED: The Corporation discussed and accepted the presentation.

06/25-26

EDUCATION INSPECTION: GOVERNOR RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE NEW EDUCATION INSPECTION FRAMEWORK

The Vice Principal – Quality of Education (VPQE) presented the key changes to the Ofsted Inspection Framework, focussing on the shift to a 16-grade report card with a five-point grading scale. Providers will be expected to meet 131 judgement statements to achieve the expected standard and more to meet higher grades.

There is a strong focus on inclusion, leadership, and governance with the new framework placing significant emphasis on inclusion, requiring evidence of support for disadvantaged students, those with SEND, care-experienced students, and those previously involved with social care or the youth justice system. Governors are expected to monitor and challenge provision for these groups.

SE queried how evidence would be provided for the 131 standards. The VPQE clarified that while written evidence for each standard is not required, the Group will use existing KPIs and the self-assessment processes to demonstrate compliance, aiming to minimise additional workload.

Feedback from pilot inspections indicated high stress levels among staff and a perception that the process is more audit-like, with a heavy focus on data. The VPQE and others raised concern that the new framework may increase workload and stress, despite intentions to reduce it.

RESOLVED: The Corporation discussed and accepted the update on the new Ofsted Inspection Framework.

The Assistant Principal – Landbased (APL) reported on the recent Landex peer review at Broomfield, highlighting positive findings, areas for improvement in health and safety, digital skills, and traffic management.

Members also noted that Sue Bradley regularly meets with the APL for link governor meetings and annually attends the Landex visits to demonstrate governance oversight and engagement with campus activities.

Member and leaders discussed concerns around traffic issues, the risks around this and previous attempts to resolve with the Highways Agency.

RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the update provided.

08/25-26 **REPORT FROM THE CURRICULUM PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2025**

The Committee Chair presented the report from the Curriculum Performance Committee held on 30 September 2025.

The Committee had received a report on education outcomes which included A level and GCSE results and T level performance. The Group achieved 100% pass rates in 11 out of 21 A level subjects, with 71% of grades at A to C. GCSE results in English and maths were above average, though disadvantaged students remained a concern.

RSD asked what the Group were doing to mitigate the concerns around computer science. There had been ongoing difficulties in recruiting computer science teachers were discussed. A new teacher is expected to start in September.

An enrolment update had been shared in relation to the study programme and T Levels. T Levels had seen a slight dip, but overall programme areas were oversubscribed, particularly automotive and building environment.

Student voice had also been shared through the annual report which was positive.

The meeting had concluded with a presentation from the lead Advanced Practitioner for AI, which had outlined the Group's AI journey, this had been confirmed by the Head of JWC on the Committee Chair's recent visit – with AI helping workload needs.

RESOLVED: The Corporation noted and accepted the report from the Curriculum Performance Committee.

The Committee had carried out an annual review of the Terms of Reference and recommended for approval.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the updated Committee Terms of Reference.

An internal review had been undertaken of the Student Voice and Compliments and Complaints Policies with no significant changes.

RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the Student Voice and Compliments and Complaints Policies.

09/25-26 **SAR VALIDATION PANELS AND AMR PANELS**

The SAR Validation Panels had commenced and members provided feedback on those they had attended to date. JMC had also attended some of the AMR panels.

The Chair pointed out that not all panels included a governor and it was agreed the Clerk would recirculate the vacant panels to members.

Clerk 24/10/25

RESOLVED: The Corporation noted the SAR and AMR Panel activity.

10/25-26 **REPORT FROM FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2025**

The FRC Chair shared the key headlines from the Management Accounts for Period 12, noting the draft numbers were subject to the external audit. The Group's financial health score was outstanding with positive cashflow and capital investment. The EBITDA ratio exceeded targets, driven by positive recruitment and funding.

RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the FRC Chair's report.

A recent audit revealed the Group was under licenced for Windows Defender. A review of End Point Protection had taken place and it was proposed a SOPHOS solution for managed detection and response following a comprehensive procurement process. At a cost of £504K for 3 years, which was the equivalent to £168k per year including VAT. Temporary cover was in place. The Committee recommended the Corporation approve the SOPHOS solution at a cost of £504K over three years.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the SOPHOS solution at a cost of £504K over three years.

A proposal had been presented to progress plans for the **Hudson Building Extension** to RIBA Stage 4 planning at a cost of £193,400 + VAT (£232,080 including VAT) in preparation for capital funding opportunities in April 2026. The Committee had discussed the strategic rationale and the risk analysis before recommending to the Corporation for approval.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the proposal to progress plans for the Hudson Building at a cost of £193,400 plus VAT.

A proposal was discussed to renew and expand the **lease for adult learning at the St James Centre** to consolidate provision and increase capacity delivering a neutral financial impact, at a cost of £370,246 over a 3-year period. Subject to due diligence and external validation. The Committee recommended the proposal to renew and expand the lease for the St James Centre at a cost of £370,246.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the proposal to renew and expand the lease for the St James Centre at a cost of £370,246.

A report on Fire Door Compliance outlined the tender process was underway for replacement and repair of fire doors following updated fire safety requirements. The initial expenditure was £230,000 was covered by capital grant monies. The Committee recommended the replacement and repair of the fire doors, noting the contractor selection would follow.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the replacement and repair of fire doors, noting the approved contractor would be advised once the tender process had concluded.

The Committee had undertaken a review of its Terms of Reference and recommended to the Corporation for approval.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the updated Committee Terms of Reference.

The Committee had reviewed the Employee Engagement, Sub-contracting and Treasury Management Policies and recommended for approval.

An internal review of the Employee Bullying and Harassment, Redundancy, IT Security and IT Acceptable Use Policies had been undertaken with no significant changes.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the Employee Engagement, Sub-contracting and Treasury Management Polices and accepted the internal review of the Employee Bullying and Harassment, Redundancy, IT Security and IT Acceptable Use Policies.

11/25-26 **REPORT FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON 1 OCTOBER 2025**

The report from the Audit Committee held on 1 October 2025 was presented.

The Committee had received a cyber security update by the Director of IT, with an audit by JISC scheduled for January.

Members had received the Annual Data Protection Report and Annual Freedom of Information Report, both of which outlined activity and compliance throughout the year.

The new internal auditors had joined the meeting to present their Internal Audit Needs Assessment and the external audit was progressing well with the draft DFE Regularity Self-Assessment presented.

An annual review of the Committee's Terms of Reference had taken place – which as an independent committee they approved for adoption.

Following an internal review the Public Interest Disclosure Policy was recommended for approval.

The Corporation Chair asked if the new internal auditors were aware of and had reviewed the internal audit position. The Committee Chair explained they were and had reviewed the position to note where attention should be focussed.

RSD referenced the Data Protection Report and the 17 breaches and asked if that was acceptable. The Committee Chair explained the breaches were monitored at each meeting and by comparison it wasn't significant. The focus was ensuring those who breach go through training to resolve.

RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the report and approved the Public Interest Disclosure Policy.

12/25-26 **STRATEGIC RISK REPORT**

• **CORPORATE RISK REGISTER**

The Strategic Risk Report was shared , 24 risks were under review, with no change to key risks (staffing, financial pressures and targets), and updates on litigation, health and safety, safeguarding and Prevent were received.

The Committee recommended the Risk Register be accepted. A review of the Risk Management Policy had taken place with minor changes required. The Risk Management Policy was recommended to the Corporation for approval.

RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the Strategic Risk Report and Corporate Risk Register and approved the Risk Management Policy.

13/25-26 **ANNUAL STRATEGIC CONVERSATION LETTER**

The Corporation received a letter from the DFE following the Annual Strategic Conversation meeting held on 11 June 2025.

RESOLVED: The Corporation received and noted the letter.

14/25-26 **LINK GOVERNOR VISITS**

JM provided an overview following her link visit to STEPs and Routes on 26 September 2025. She had a tour of the provision at the Johnson and was impressed by the environment created, particularly as it was a Friday afternoon and students were engaged in lectures. She said it was a powerful model and the use of youth workers was key in engaging the students in education. The Vice Principal of Student Experience and Pastoral Support reflected there had been good attendance, which they would continue to address. There were some challenging characters and some that needed nurturing. Further space was discussed and it was noted parental engagement was high.

AB shared an update after his Academic link visit. The Assistant Principal had taken on further responsibilities with English and maths supported by the Head of A Levels. Feedback on the SAR validation process was positive with an overall 'good' grade with further work being undertaken on attendance at tutorials. They had discussed every subject and staffing and AB highlighted the EPQs which had been a real success for the area. They had gone on to discuss the E&M GCSE programme with 200 students undertaking exams in November. T Levels were slightly down on enrolment and capacity was always an issue.

SE had carried out his link visit for Technology and Vocational. He noted the change in the DCEO and Vice Principal – Technical and Vocational portfolios. They had discussed attracting and retaining staff, and had managed to attract a high quality staff member back to the team. Overall performance was good with huge scope for this year.

RESOLVED: The Corporation accepted the Link Governor visit verbal reports.

15/25-26 **ANNUAL REVIEW OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND COMPOSITION**

The following Committee Chairs and Composition was agreed:

Curriculum Performance Committee – Alan Brady (Chair), Sue Bradley, Andrew Cochrane, Nikol Daskalova, Guy Hodgkinson, Jill Matthews, Mandie Stravino, Anju Virdee

Audit Committee – Andy Dymond (Chair), Stuart Ellis, Rosslyn Green (co-opted)

Finance and Resources Committee – Martyn Marples (for 1st meeting) (Chair), Andrew Cochrane, Mandie Stravino and Simon Allsop

Search and Governance – Andrew Cochrane (Chair), Alan Brady, Mandie Stravino

Performance and Remuneration Committee – Andy Dymond (Chair), Alan Brady, Andrew Cochrane, Martyn Marples (for October and December) and Simon Allsop from January 2026 onwards.

RESOLVED: The Corporation approved the Board Chairs and composition.

16/25-26 CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

There were no consent agenda items brought forward for discussion. The agenda items for approval had already been discussed as part of the main agenda.

The staff and student governor left the meeting.

The meeting finished at 5.50 pm