Approved Minutes of Corporation Meeting

Held on Tuesday 16 December 2025
at 5.30pm in The Function Room, Peakman Campus

Present:
David Ash, Chair of Corporation
Michelle Dowse, Principal
Jane Britton, Governor
Phil Colledge, Governor
Helen Davies, Governor
Vicki Davies, Governor
Adam Hall, Governor (via Teams)
Paul Hine, Staff Governor
Tony King, Governor
Allen McConaghie, Governor
Henry Nwelue-Kelechi, Student Governor
Muj Rahman, Governor
Sarah Warwick, Student Governor
Donna Gibson, Governance Professional

In Attendance:
Simon Kibble, Deputy Principal
Cherie Clements, VP Finance & Corporate Operations
Matt Gower, VP Quality (up to item 75.12
Peter Robinson, VP HE, Adults & Curriculum Development
Julia Breakwell, VP Student Experience & Support

Item No	Item	Action For
75.1	**Corporation Photo** Marketing attended to take the Corporation photograph.	
75.2	**Welcome & Apologies** The Chair welcomed everyone to the final meeting of Term 1. Papers were taken as having been read in advance. Apologies were received from Gaynor Cheshire, Julie Hurlston-McKeown, Steve Smith, and Steve Stanier. Adam Hall was present via Teams. The Chair shared a message from Julie Hurlston-McKeown noting that the wider Corporation shared the same sentiments with regards to the positive journey the College is undertaking. The Governance Professional confirmed that the meeting was quorate.	
75.3	**Presentation – Staff Survey Results** The Corporation received a presentation from Gary Cattermole of Survey Initiative, noting that the results were incredibly positive with a good participation rate from staff and that in some areas the College is outperforming norms seen in both the education sector and across industry. The Committee acknowledged that a few departments had a lower engagement rate, and those are being addressed via College Management. However, this did not distract from the positive results. The Chair of Corporation thanked GC for the presentation and reiterated that the Corporation are impressed with the results. The results go towards validating the change of culture that has occurred within the College. The results are clear on what needs to be a focus next year. Questions were invited from the Corporation: *A Governor asked what can be done to maximise the awareness of these impressive results outside of the College?* College Management advised that they will be included in recruitment campaigns and will be used for the submission for The Times Best Company award. The Principal advised there are still things to be done and be addressed and highlighted workload as an area that can be an ongoing area of challenge. Staff have been asked to do their day-to-day roles whilst a significant period of transformation has been taking place. As a result, there has	

	been an increased focus on staff wellbeing culminating in a staff CPD morning in Worcester at the end of term 1 and a staff 'ME Day' on the final day of term where the buildings will be closed, and staff can choose how they spend the day. College Management advised the Corporation that a College wide Workwise Group was being set up to look into the issues around systems and processes. This will aid Management's understanding of what staff feel is impacting upon them and what can be done to positively improve the workload and dispel any concerns. *A Governor asked about the areas with low engagement and if Management understood the reasons why?* College Management confirmed that the areas themselves have seen the results and are aware of them. Management will work with the areas to address their concerns and provide feedback. The Principal has extended an offer to meet with the team with the lowest scores directly. *A Governor queried whether any additional analysis had been undertaken on those areas to identify any emerging or recurring themes or trends.* College Management confirmed that some specific issues relate to certain teams. The team with the lowest scores which are different to the rest of the College t are high performing in terms of learner numbers and outcomes Management will continue to explore the underlying concerns and assess whether further opportunities should be provided for colleagues in more neuro-diverse environments, noting that several opportunities have already been offered to those staff. *The same Governor thanked Management for the response and acknowledged that the results are great and as a Governor they have seen a significant push towards changing the culture in the College, but asked how do Management ensure that everyone is inspection ready and how is the momentum maintained post inspection?* The Principal responded that the College strategy and the seven strategic themes are used to ensure that staff are clear on the direction of travel. The strategy has been put into a roadmap which staff are familiar with and is referred to at meetings and staff briefings. The Principal also has regular sessions to meet staff and feedback on items raised at those sessions are shared with staff so that they can see steps being taken by Management. The Chair of Corporation thanked GC for the presentation concluding that it was useful for the Corporation to hear the exceptional feedback directly. The presentation would be added to the Governor Portal and the link shared with Governors.	Governance Professional
75.4	**Declarations of Interest** There were no declarations of interest to be declared.	
75.5	**Approved Minutes For The Following Corporation Meetings** The minutes of the September Workshop were noted.	
75.6	**Matters Arising** The actions from the September Workshop were monitored. With the exception of one in progress all were completed.	
75.7	**Determination of Any Other Business** The Chair of Corporation informed those present that an expression of interest for the role of Chair of Corporation had been received from the existing Vice Chair. Due process will be followed, and the matter will be discussed at Governance & Search Committee in January, and a decision made at the March Corporation. More information would be discussed at the confidential section of the meeting with Board members.	
75.8	**Principal's Report including KPIs**	

	The Corporation received the Principal's report which was taken as read in advance. The Corporation noted that the report is intended to provide an overview of the local, regional, and national context. Challenge from Governors on any element of the report is encouraged. *A question had been received outside of the meeting regarding the theme Potential and the DfE Adult Skills Fund.* The Principal advised that the College is predicting over delivering on the adult fund, which comprises several elements of funding. These individual elements enable funds to be vired and used. Due to the known issues across the sector with regards to adult funding, virement has been used meaning transfer from the tailored learning pot which leaves less funds for application to tailored learning. The Principal noted that the AoC are actively pushing for more funding to be made available. The Principal informed the Corporation that bids are open for the Technical Excellence Colleges, however the current Ofsted grade prevents the College from making a submission. It is unlikely that there will be a Technical College of Excellence within Worcestershire due to constraints on other colleges in the locality. The College will consider expanding its digital provision. The Principal drew the Corporation's attention to the KPIs and the number of them rated as RED and welcomed questions about those. *A Governor sought clarification that they do not include Term 1 to date?* They were advised they do not. *A Governor commended the report but challenged those areas that are underperforming and are in the Rapid Improvement Group (RIG) process and questioned why some have been in there for more than a year and what is being done.* The Principal assured the Corporation that ELT review these regularly and that there are several measures to be met for an area to come out of the process. The VP for Quality (VPQ) was invited to address the challenge. They responded that areas are placed into the RIG process because they are facing significant challenges. Meetings are held monthly, with the VPQ, members of ELT and the Quality Team attending. The meetings are rigorous and go into the details of what can be done to improve, what has improved and the pace at which improvement is being made. Progress against identified actions are monitored and there can be as many as 10 to 12 meetings for the group, so a lot of scrutiny is being given to those areas. With two terms to go all of the actions are currently on track and some areas may not need to be in the RIG process in 26/27. The Deputy Principal provided an example of an area that had been asked to revise the scheme of work to provide learners with two opportunities in year to undertake exam related components, as opposed to the original one opportunity that took place too late in the year. The Corporation were assured that the RIG process contributes towards maximising the learners' chances of success. *A Governor questioned developments with the levy funding and short courses*. They were advised that details are still awaited. Some focus is anticipated to come through from the Industrial Strategy but without the details it is difficult to see what can be implemented. *The Governor acknowledged this and asked what plans will be in place for the next academic year.* They were advised that the College is already looking at any areas that can be utilised for bitesize provision and broad preparations will be started so that when the details are released the provision will be ready to deliver. The Governor noted that as a large employer in the area, their business was keen to maximise any new Levy opportunities and therefore stressed the importance of the College being ready to meet employer needs. *A Governor challenged the 10% increase in safeguarding incidents, noting that it was a relatively low % increase but are College Management concerned?* The Vice Principal Student Experience and Support (VPSES) assured the Corporation that the team monitor the situation constantly. Term 1 always sees the highest number of incidents and the capacity within the team has been directed towards the safeguarding incidents, which can vary in their complexities. If the pattern were to continue, consideration would need to be given to increasing the team again, going	

	forward. The VPSES informed the Corporation that the main curriculum areas within the 10% are Progressions, SEN, and Health & Social Care. *A Governor questioned if there are many referrals to Worcestershire County Council (WCC)? In response the VPSES advised that referrals between the two organisations are ongoing all year round. The VPSES also confirmed that the College receives strong support from the Police service and has strong multi agency links with statutory and community partners to support learners.* *A Governor asked if there was an update on the in-year funding for 16-19?* The Principal advised that £500k is anticipated if applying the current methodology. The amount will not be known until March 2026. If the predicted amount were received it would be helpful to the College surplus position, covering the extensive additional costs as a result of increased student numbers. *The Governor asked if that would be the only item that could assist the position?* College Management advised that no other significant amounts are anticipated, although there is a push to achieve apprenticeship targets which if not achieved, could increase the current deficit position. *A Governor asked if there is an insight into why English and Maths attendance remains lower than for course attendance?* In response the Deputy Principal advised that this is an ongoing focus. He continued that very little is known about school attendance when leaners arrive at the College and work is currently underway to see if this data is available from WCC, so that College attendance versus school attendance can be analysed. Attendance is an ongoing challenge that is constantly subject to scrutiny. *A Governor challenged if there is somewhere within the sector where a provider has successfully addressed attendance problems that we can learn from?* They were informed that there is not, and the issue is very much a national challenge. *A Governor challenged Management that the academic year is almost halfway through. How does Management know that we are on course, the absence of anything in the YTD on the spreadsheet suggests that it is not being measured.* In response they were advised that the absence of progress data on the spreadsheet is an anomaly at the moment whilst the marking of the mock resits is being undertaken. *The Governor emphasised the need for assurance that learners are on track for positive outcomes*. Management confirmed each learner has a minimum expected grade, with most anticipated to pass. When asked when results will be known, they were advised this will be confirmed early next year. The Principal added that a checkpoint process is in place, with approximately 95% expected to pass. *Governors noted this was encouraging.* As further assurance for Governors, they were advised that triangulation also takes place between learning walks and teacher forecasting. The VPQ expanded on the triangulation, confirming that is also extended to include learner voice and lesson visits. The Principal stated that keeping on track is important in getting towards the College target of top quartile results. *A Governor commented that they had participated in the recent scrutiny reviews and supported what is being reported. It was clear from those reviews that Curriculum Leaders have a good understanding of the learners.* *A Governor asked what assurance can be given to Governors overall around attendance?* They were advised that targets are set to be intentionally ambitious, in the New Year, we hope that data will be shared with WCC so that school and college data can be compared, where learners are not attending steps are taken to ensure that their studies are being maintained and this also includes disadvantaged and vulnerable learners. *The Corporation reflected that the reporting sets out the position and through the thorough discussion it can be seen that there is a clear ambition to maximise the potential of every learner*.	
75.9	**Committee Chairs Update (Verbal)**	

	The Corporation received a summary of what had been covered at the Teaching & Learning Committee: • Ofsted preparation with staff had been discussed, Management had reported that staff were confident and aware of the expectations. • KPIs had been considered for 25/26 with discussion around stretch and challenge. • A robust discussion had taken place about RIGs. • The Committee had agreed to the inclusion of Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) actions into the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), agreeing that the time was right to end the PIAP. • There had been a productive discussion about Apprenticeships. • The Committee had been extremely pleased with the results of the National Student Survey (HE) • The 10% increase in safeguarding incidents had also been noted by the Committee and assurance had been sought that College Management would monitor this. • A number of policies and documents had been reviewed	
75.10	**KPIs - Curriculum & Quality 25/26** Corporation noted that the Teaching & Learning Committee had scrutinised the KPIs proposed at length. College Management advised that information on returning learners was going to be incorporated into reporting, with the challenge being the number of learners at Entry Level progressing to Level 1. More learners are staying with the College and with high numbers, returning targets to the next level, need to be ambitious. Departments will have Department Based Targets set for next year. Corporation APPROVED the KPIs for 2025/26.	
75.11	**College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)** Corporation noted that Teaching & Learning Committee had scrutinised the QIP proposal at length and had agreed the format which had been presented in the Reading Room as a populated document with the Term 1 actions RAG rated. *A Governor commented that they had attended the SEND Scrutiny Review and there had been some concerns arising from that, have Management taken any actions from that review?* They were advised that there had been follow up after the review. The context presented had been unclear and the team had been asked to ensure that future messaging is clearer and proportionate and linked to the context. Overall, the Team are strong and going forward there should be a more positive review in Term 2. Corporation APPROVED the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).	
75.12	College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 24/25 The VPQ summarised the process for Governors. A new approach to the self-assessment had started in June with all areas presenting their strengths and weaknesses. The process had received positive feedback from a visiting HMI. The College wide self-assessment had commenced in August considering the new Ofsted framework. The process included reflection and challenge. The decision was made not to grade. A Validation Event took place in early November with a peer reviewer from another College and with members of the Corporation present. The product of the entire process is the version of the SAR presented in the papers. *A Governor who had attended the Validation Event confirmed that the process had been a through process with good challenge and discussion.* Corporation APPROVED the Self- Assessment Report (SAR) for 2024/25. The Corporation expressed their thanks for all of the hard work that had gone into the process. The VPQ left the meeting at this point.	

75.13	**HE Self Evaluation Document (SED)** The Vice Principal, HE, Adults & Curriculum Development (VPHEACD) explained to the Corporation that the SED follows the same format as the SAR for the FE provision. The SED had been reviewed by the Teaching and Learning Committee and the Corporation noted that it was a thorough document. Corporation APPROVED the HE Self Evaluation Document (SED).	
75.14	**Financial KPIs** The Corporation received the KPIs noting that there had been some impact on finances which is attributed to delivery of teaching for the extra learners, Good financial health had been reported, and the Corporation were advised that two of the FEC Benchmarks were RED due to the deficit position.	
75.15	**Learner Numbers Update** The Corporation noted the update. The Vice Principal Finance and Corporate Operations (VPFCO) confirmed the College had submitted the ILR Submission R04 which the DfE will use to determine the growth in numbers in this academic year. There are 2768 learners on the submission, and the Corporation were advised that this is 189 more than last year which should trigger an increase in funding next year. Numbers are on target for HE learners. *A Governor asked now that the 42-day period has passed whether any withdrawals thereafter will have any impact?* They were advised that there would be no impact now. *A Governor questioned if the increase in numbers is due to the change in demographic?* The Principal advised that it is partially but can also be attributed to schools not retaining their numbers. It reflects an increased market share for the College. It is expected that this ongoing increase will eventually level out and the College is in a fortunate position that the demographics should not see such a decline as other colleges expect to experience.	
75.16	**Tender Committee Minutes** The Corporation noted that the minutes had been provided in the Reading Room.	
75.17	**Audit Committee** The Corporation received a comprehensive summary of what had been discussed at the Audit Committee meeting and noted: • The Committee held private discussions with both the Auditors and Senior Management, and no issues of concern were raised by either party. Members noted the positive outcome of the external audit and reflected on the continuing improvement in the College's audit and assurance environment. • Bishop Fleming (the College's External Auditors) reported a smooth and efficient audit process, noting a high level of cooperation and preparedness from the Finance Team. A clean audit opinion is anticipated for the Financial Statements, Regularity, and Going Concern assessments, with all "traffic light" indicators rated green. • Governors had sought clarification on risk exposure relating to pensions. The Committee was assured that risk remains limited unless the deficit increases, and that no additional liability exposure sits with Governors. • The Committee received a detailed Going Concern Review, noting a £19k surplus in the latest forecast. Uncertainty remains regarding funding for additional learners. The Committee was assured that the College can meet its obligations to July 2026 without adverse operational impact. • The cashflow forecast to July 2027 highlighted a strong liquidity position: • Projected cash balance: £9.8m (July 2026) and £8.7m (July 2027)	

	• The Committee reviewed the Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire and was satisfied that funding claims and DfE/WMCA returns are completed appropriately. • No novel, contentious or repercussive transactions occurred, and no special severance payments were made • Governance processes are robust and clearly documented. • Concerning potential future dual reporting requirements for apprenticeships (DfE and DWP), the Committee were advised that compliance with frameworks will continue until a consolidated approach is implemented nationally. • Molinna Ltd and NEWCEL accounts were noted. The Committee requested an options appraisal on the future of the companies, recognising that one structure may be required for VAT and commercial purposes. • The Committee received a Final Internal Audit Summary from RSM (The College's Internal Auditors) and noted forthcoming audits on Safeguarding and Risk Management from the Internal Auditors - WBG. WBG also reported on its detailed AI Advisory Review. • The Committee conducted a comprehensive review of the Annual Risk Management Report, the Risk Management Plan, and the Strategic Risk Register. Fourteen risks sit above the minimal appetite threshold. Governors recognised that several risks reflect wider sector and national issues beyond the College's control, and that the Board may need to tolerate elevated risk levels for the time being. • Members commended the improved format of the Risk Register, noting clearer visual movements, improved assurance information, and overall better strategic clarity. • The Committee received the Draft Internal Audit Committee Annual Report 2024/25 and requested expanded commentary on the transition to the new Internal Audit provider. • Performance mapping against the Committee's Terms of Reference confirmed full compliance for 2024/25. • The Committee reviewed its own meeting effectiveness and expressed confidence in the quality of assurance, challenge, and paper presentation. The Committee recommended that Corporation approve the following: • 2024/25 Financial Statements • External Audit Report • Letter of Representation • Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire • Teachers' Pension (End of Year Certificate) (EOYC • Annual Risk Management Report and Risk Management Plan • Strategic Risk Register • Internal Audit Committee Report *A Governor commented that some of the risks on the register were still high even after mitigation*. They were advised that some were beyond the control of the College. *A Governor questioned whether access to the Whistleblowing process is well advertised and how confident are Management that staff know how to report concerns?* Management responded that it is covered at staff induction. *The same Governor asked if there is any active promotion of it, campaigns, or advertising.* The Principal advised that the College values are strong, and staff adhere to them. There is no specific campaigning that is done but it can be looked into and can be made clear on what is and is not an item covered by the process. The Governance Professional advised that the policy is due for review, and the suggestion can be factored in where appropriate. The Board took reassurance from the Committee's thorough review and scrutiny of the documents. The Chair of Corporation advised the Corporation that there had been some minor revisions suggested to the Financial Statements to clarify general factual information presented about the College; they were linked to the narrative and have no impact on the figures and would be incorporated in the final version after verification by VPFCO.	Governance Professional & Principal

	With the exception of the Teachers' Pension EOYC which does not require Corporation approval, the Corporation APPROVED all of the documents that were recommended.	
75.18	**Finance & Resources Committee** The Corporation received a verbal update from the Committee Chair and noted: • The termly Health and Safety reporting had been received. • The Health and Safety Policy had been reviewed. • KPIs for Place, Planet and People had been considered. • The finance KPIs and the deficit position had been discussed. • At the request of the Committee, Management had presented a comprehensive report on bids and funding which had been a useful overview of potential income sources. • The Committee had also robustly discussed the Staff Survey and the areas with low engagement. • The GDPR annual report and the appointment of the third-party provider for GDPR and FOI services had been discussed. • A comprehensive HR update had been provided. • The Sustainability Report had been received. • Policies had been reviewed. The Committee were satisfied that none of the reporting had indicated anything new of significant concern that the Corporation needed to be made aware of.	
75.19	**KPI's – Place, Planet, People 25/26** The Corporation noted that the KPIs had been reviewed and challenged by the Finance and Resources Committee. The Corporation APPROVED the KPIs for 25/26.	
75.20	**Learner Voice** a) Learner Voice Report 24/25 and b) Arrivals Survey The Corporation noted that the two documents were linked and were provided for information. The Corporation noted that they were both positive reports.	
75.21	**Lead Governor Updates** **Apprenticeships** • The Lead Governor had met with the Vice Principal for Apprenticeships, Partnerships and Skills (VPAPS) to discuss activity this term and what may be on the horizon. • Short courses were discussed as an opportunity and how to capitalise on them. • The ins and outs of the move to DWP for the Apprenticeship Levy funding were considered but detail is still awaited. • There may be an increased focus on the employer element. Our current employer engagement is strong but may need an increased focus from the College depending on what comes from the details. **IT & Digital** • Several topics had been discussed including lessons learned from the JLR incident. • Agreement had been reached for paper copies of key documents to be retained by the VPFCO and Head of IT offsite at home. • The risks associated with cyber security are being reviewed and assessed individually. • An out of hours response is being considered. • The implementation of humidity and temperature sensors had been discussed (in light of the P Block damage by flooding) The VPCO advised that paper copies of the Emergency Management and Business Continuity Plan had been issued to key staff and also the Chair of Corporation, Vice Chair of Corporation, and the Governance Professional.	

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Safeguarding
In the absence of the Lead Governor, the DSL summarised the termly meeting.
The position statement for Safeguarding had been shared.
An update on the single central register had been discussed.
Enhancements to mandatory training for staff and the security briefing and lockdown practice planned for January in Bromsgrove were considered.
The Lead Governor was advised that there will be an internal audit of safeguarding in January.
The increase in the number of incidents was covered.
The Governance Professional confirmed that the position statement and update would be circulated to the Corporation.</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>75.22</td><td>Policies and Strategies For Approval
The Governance Professional had circulated in advance of the papers going out several documents that required approval and had been reviewed and scrutinised at Committee level:
HE Fees Policy
Health & Safety Policy
Managing Allegations Policy
Governance Arrangements for Obtaining Staff, Student & Employer Views
Code of Conduct for Corporation Members
Protocols for College Staff & Governor Arrangements
Succession Planning (Governors) Policy
Careers Strategy
Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
Student FE Complaints Procedure
Student HE Complaints Procedure
Prevent Strategy
Safeguarding Annual Report 2425
Senior Postholder Policy For Income Derived From External Activities
The Governance Professional confirmed that there had been no questions or objections received to any of the documents and the recommendation was that they be approved.

Corporation APPROVED all of the documents recommended.

Before they left the meeting, the Chair of Corporation thanked Staff Governors, Student Governors, and ELT for their contributions this term.

The Staff Governor, Student Governors and members of ELT (other than the VPFCO) who were present then left the meeting. The VPFCO remained in the meeting in readiness for the Confidential Agenda Meeting,</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>75.23</td><td>Governance & Search Committee
The Corporation received the Committee Chair’s verbal update.

The Committee had discussed:
Recruitment actions
Succession Planning
Governor attendance
Governor Training</td><td></td></tr>
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	• The Governance Improvement Plan • 26/27 Draft Calendar • Agenda for the Strategic Planning Day and revisions suggested by the Committee • Standing Orders and the Instruments & Articles revisions progress.	
75.24	**Publishing Governance & Search Committee Minutes** The Corporation noted that minutes of Governance & Search Committee often contain sensitive information. Based on that the recommendation of the Committee was to not publish the minutes publicly on the website. The Governance Professional advised that they would still be made available if requested by external sources such as Internal Audit or External Board Reviewers. The Chair of Corporation reminded the Corporation that there are processes in place as to how minutes are dealt with, and the recommendation is in line with those and compliant with College legislation. The Corporation APPROVED the decision to not publish minutes from the Governance & Search Committee meetings.	
75.25	**Review of meeting effectiveness & reflections** The Corporation reflected upon the effectiveness of the meeting and whether there were sufficient challenge and adequate discussions. • Discussions were thorough and productive. • Several challenges had been made across several areas. • The level of challenge was justified and appropriate. • All Governors had been able to participate. • Everyone had been engaged in the meeting. • The pack had been easy to navigate. • Early circulation of papers for approval before issue of the Main Pack, where possible and appropriate, had been helpful and allowed more time at the meeting for discussion on key agenda items.	
75.26	**Any Other Business** There were no items of any other business, save for the matter already discussed earlier in the meeting and recorded at Agenda Item 75.7.	
	Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 22 January 2026, Strategic Planning Day, Redditch Campus.	