Approved Minutes of Corporation Meeting

Held on Tuesday 24 March 2026
at 5.30pm B105/106, Bromsgrove Campus

Present:	**In Attendance:**
David Ash, Chair of Corporation Chris Hallam, Vice Chair of Corporation Michelle Dowse, Principal Jane Britton, Governor Gaynor Cheshire, Governor Phil Colledge, Governor Helen Davies, Governor Vicki Davies, Governor Adam Hall, Governor Paul Hine, Staff Governor Tony King, Governor Allen McConaghie, Governor Julie Hurlston-McKeown – from Item 77.3 Henry Nwelue-Kelechi, Student Governor Muj Rahman, Governor Steve Smith, Governor Sarah Warwick, Student Governor Donna Gibson, Governance Professional	Simon Kibble, Deputy Principal – Up to Item 77.18 Cherie Clements, VP Finance & Corporate Operations – Up to Item 77.18 and for Item 77.24 Peter Robinson, VP HE, Adults & Curriculum Development – Up to Item 77.18 Julia Breakwell, VP Student Experience & Support – Up to Item 77.18 Mo Horan, VP Apprenticeships, Partnership & Skills – Up to Item 77.18

Item		**Action For**
77.1	**Welcome & Apologies** The Chair of Corporation welcomed attendees and made brief opening remarks recognising the positive Ofsted Inspection outcome, noting that the draft report is expected imminently. The outcome was described as one to be proud of and to be shared once the final report is published. Governors were reminded of the importance of continuing to provide robust challenge to Management, which had attracted positive feedback from the Inspection Team The Governance Professional confirmed that the meeting was quorate, and apologies had been received from Steve Stanier. Julie McKeown-Hurlston was expected to join the meeting. The Chair of Corporation confirmed that Julie had tendered her resignation from the Corporation for personal reasons, to take immediate effect from the close of this meeting.	
77.2	**Declarations of Interest** There were no declarations of interest declared.	
77.3a	**Corporation Appointments** **Chair of Corporation Role** In accordance with recommendations of the Governance and Search Committee the Corporation approved the appointment of Chris Hallam as Chair of Corporation from 1 August 2026 for a term of two years (noting that CH will be Chair Designate from 25 March to 31 July 2026).	
77.3b	**The Vice Chair of Corporation Role** It was noted that an appointment internally would be preferable to advertising the role externally. Eligible members of the Corporation were encouraged to	

express their interest in the role either to the Chair, Vice Chair or Governance Professional.

A discussion took place about what alternatives could be considered and these included:

- whether a Vice Chair was required
- the impact on succession planning
- whether some form of rotation of the Committee Chairs as also Vice Chair could be put in place
- additionally, should a Senior Independent Governor (SIG) be introduced, as is the case in some organisations

The Governance Professional advised that current guidance does not mandate the need for a Vice Chair, so the role is not legally required. The role is considered best practice across the FE sector.

A Governor suggested that the expectation to become Chair of the Corporation may be a deterrent to individuals coming forward to express their interest.

Some Governors supported a rotating approach, undertaken by Committee Chairs, noting that the number of Chairs would ensure sufficient capacity for an individual to step in when required.

There was a general agreement that externally recruiting for a Vice Chair would not present a positive impression and undermine the effectiveness of the Board, particularly when advertising at the same time as recruiting for Governors.

The Board noted that the future Chair and Vice Chair would be in post at a time when planning for the future Ofsted Inspection would begin.

A Governor asked how long the term of office is for the role? In response they were advised that the term is two years.

A Governor questioned the current Appeals Committee arrangements, noting that the Chair of Corporation also chairs the Committee, and queried whether the Principal/CEO should be part of the decision-making process. It was noted that the Committee has not been convened to date and that the Chair's inclusion is a flexible arrangement. Any request to convene the Committee would be made via the Governance Professional, with additional Governors appointed if required. The Governance Professional advised that the Committee's role, membership, and supporting constitutional provisions should be reviewed, and cross-checked against the FE and HE complaints procedures for consistency. The role of the Principal/CEO would be determined by the nature and circumstances of each individual appeal.

Julie McKeown-Hurlston joined the meeting.

The Chair of Corporation took the opportunity to welcome Julie to the meeting and to thank her for her contribution as a Staff Governor, noting that her input had been appreciated.

77.3c	**Committee Membership:** In accordance with recommendations of the Governance and Search Committee the Corporation approved the appointment of Helen Davies as a member of Audit Committee with immediate effect. **Vacancies** The Governance Professional had included a summary of where the Chair vacancies and membership vacancies will arise across the Committees from 1 August 2026 in view of Governor retirements on 31 July. The Corporation noted that this has an impact on the composition of the Board. Governors were asked to express their interest in joining any of the Committees where vacancies will occur to either the Chair, Vice Chair or Governance Professional. Governors were also asked to consider if there were any individuals across their networks who may be suitable potential Governors. ***ELT joined the meeting.***	
77.4	**Approved Minutes For The Following Corporation Meetings:** The minutes of the December Corporation were received. The attendee list to be updated to reflect that Chris Hallam was present.	Governance Professional
77.5	**Matters Arising** The Corporation noted that one item remained ongoing. The Governance Professional confirmed that the Whistleblowing Policy is currently being reviewed against the recently issued Eversheds Sutherland template. The review aims to streamline the policy and ensure it is effectively communicated to staff so that they are aware of its purpose and scope.	
77.6	**Determination of Any Other Business** There were no items of business to be considered.	
77.7	**OFSTED Update** The Principal provided an update on the recent inspection and the fantastic result achieved. The Corporation noted the key points and grades in the paper provided • The draft report is expected around mid-April • The report will be reviewed and returned for publication • College Management will review the Risk Register and identify any revisions required as a result of the report • ELT will consider any recommendations made and next steps • Plans are being put in place for external promotion of the outcomes and arrangements for internal celebrations, the first being a thank you card to all staff scheduled to arrive over Easter break *A Governor queried whether the pre-inspection work with the DfE, FE Commissioner and on data had given the impression that the College was on the right path, and whether this led to a less challenging inspection?* The	

	Principal stated that they had not experienced such an inspection and the Deputy Principal suggested that there was a sense of honesty and collaboration on both sides. Governors were reminded that the inspection was against a new framework and some of the team had early experience of the College from past inspections and monitoring visits. *The Governor suggested that the meeting with the Governor panel had looked at different areas, perhaps to give credit for?* The consensus was that overall, this inspection was at a better starting point than in 2023 and the evidence and the information provided was more robust and credible. *A Governor acknowledged that all the preparation undertaken with Governors had paid off well.* *A Governor recognised that the preparation by staff was evident, and the commitment stood out.* *The Corporation recognised that the overall management of the process by the Principal had been key.* *The Chair of Corporation acknowledged the preparation for Governors had been very professional and the sessions with Marina Gaze, an external consultant, had been invaluable. It had gone as it should and should be the model for the next inspection.* The Principal expressed their thanks to the Governors who had met with the Deputy Lead Inspector, plus the Student Governors and Muj who had been involved in other inspection meetings. The wider Board were also thanked for their continued support and encouragement.	
77.8	**Principal's Report including KPIs** The report was taken as read in advance with the Corporation being signposted to the following key points: • P Block portacabins are now being removed and the new P Block is working very well, feedback from staff and students has been incredibly positive. Plans for an official opening are being explored. • Finances are looking promising with a surplus of £288k • An announcement regarding the in year funding is anticipated • Applications are up, creating a new challenge of how to manage them • The Principal has been asked to join a second Expert Advisory Group for FE in relation to SEND reforms and was invited to Number 10 to meet the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for the launch of the Schools White paper • V Levels / A Level options are currently being mapped and reviewed • Following the Government's announcement of the Capacity Capital Fund investment for FE colleges, the College is actively considering possible bids for Post 16 and Construction Skills at Malvern and Worcester, alongside the potential relocation of the Redditch construction site to Bromsgrove. The funding process will be highly competitive. PMC, who are supporting the College's Estates Strategy, will use their in-depth understanding of the College's strategic priorities, curriculum growth plans and estate capacity to develop a bid that	

	clearly demonstrates both current demand and the College's readiness to support significant future growth in learner numbers and provision. *A Governor questioned whether work experience would feed into V Levels.* The Vice Principal Student Experience and Support reported that there is competition across the county for placements due to the reduction of employers who can offer placements. The Vice Principal HE, Adult and Curriculum Development noted that while the V Level structure does not mandate work experience, the College will continue to include it. Awarding Bodies are introducing centrally set assignments, and the Corporation recognised that revised rules now allow for remote and simulated work experience due to capacity limitations. The Principal acknowledged that the College would need maintain the momentum with its employer engagement. *A Governor agreed that the RI grade had limited opportunities for the College but wondered if there may be future opportunities ahead such as working with other colleges.* The Principal noted that the RI grade constrains current options, but the College aims to be able to bid for a Health Technical Excellence College going forward. Governors were reminded that the College's location could however, limit its access to opportunities available through the West Midlands Combined Authority. *A Governor queried whether the reference to retention of 7.06% should in fact be 93%. It was confirmed the retention is 93%.* It was noted that because of the recent Ofsted inspection, the latest KPIs were not included in the pack but would be circulated. The ongoing issue is that attendance whilst recognised as good by Ofsted, is not achieving the targets set.	
77.9	**Teaching & Learning Committee - Chairs Update** The Corporation received a verbal update on what the Committee had covered which included various updates and assurances for: • The quality of the Subcontractor provision • KPIs • Attendance – which the Committee does monitor as an area of concern to ensure that areas are being addressed • Learner Progression • Future curriculum delivery • Quality Improvement Plan • Apprenticeships • Teaching & Learning Reporting • Careers	

	• EDIMs – with the Committee requesting an update at the next meeting about the Amber rated items The Committee recognised that significant improvement has been made across the College.	
77.10	**Learner Progress** The Corporation agreed that the item should be reconsidered by the Teaching & Learning Committee before any approval is considered by the wider Board.	Governance Professional
77.11	**Financial KPIs** Corporation noted that the KPIs had previously been scrutinised by Finance & Resources Committee and noted that: • The projected deficit was now a positive surplus • Savings were being made because of the sale of Osprey House • Financial Health is Good • Four of the six FEC Benchmarks are rated Green At the time the Committee had reviewed the KPIs, no additional income had been included for the additional 16-19 student numbers as the College was unlikely to receive a decision until the end of Spring Term. The Committee had noted that if those were funded at 100% it could result in £500k of in year funding.	
77.12	**Learner Numbers Update** Corporation noted that the update had been scrutinised by Finance & Resources Committee. • 16-18 allocation (all bands) – Current learner numbers total 2788, an increase on 2752 previously submitted. The R04 submission indicated an increase of 173 learners, over allocation for 2025/26, that figure would be used to inform future funding allocations and suggested a further significant increase in allocation for 2026/27. • Apprenticeships – Total Budget for HoWC delivery is £1.7m and 251 new starts. Current new starts on the ILR were 143 with total potential funding from these new learners, and those carrying into 2025/26, totalling £1.4m. £31,000 was budgeted for subcontracting delivery and current learners indicate funding of £163,962. The Principal advised the Corporation that the Government views suggest that there may be further changes in funding and qualifications. The Vice Principal Apprenticeships, Partnership & Skills confirmed that there would not be a significant impact on new starts and the defunding date. *A Governor observed that businesses are cutting down or placing restrictions on apprenticeships and it will be key to look at how employer engagement networks and new opportunities can be used.*	
77.13	**Audit Committee - Chairs Update** The Corporation received a verbal update on what the Committee had covered noting that it was the smaller agenda of the year but had covered:	

	• 2 internal audit reports – Risk Management and Safeguarding. The auditors had identified areas of best practice in both audits. A strong level of assurance was provided by the Safeguarding audit and the preparation for Martyn's Law and likewise for the Risk Management audit which demonstrated that risk management was embedded across the College. The recommendation to expand training for those involved in the Risk Register has already been taken on board by the Vice Principal Finance and Corporate Operations. • The Committee had reviewed the Risk Management Plan and the current risk appetite (post Strategic Planning Day) and the Strategic Risk Register and had agreed to recommend both for Corporation approval. *A Governor challenged the Red rating for Business Continuity and asked whether the Red for residual risk was acceptable.* The Vice Principal Finance and Corporate Operations responded that the main risk element here is cyber security, that the Audit Committee want the risk reduced and how to do so is currently being investigated with a solution in place by August. *The Governor asked whether the Corporation should accept being resigned to the possible vulnerabilities that the College is exposed to?* They were advised that everything that can be done is and will be done but it may not be enough, and it may be that we try and reduce the impact. *The Governor acknowledged that work is being done but there should always be a concern about signing off anything that remains Red.* *The Chair of Audit Committee agreed and reassured the Corporation that the Committee has full oversight of the item, and it is kept under review.* *Other Governors agreed that it was a valid point to be challenged.*	
77.14	**Risk Management Plan** On the recommendation of the Audit Committee the Corporation APPROVED the Risk Management Plan, noting that it would be an item at the September Workshop.	
77.15	**Strategic Risk Register** On the recommendation of the Audit Committee the Corporation APPROVED the Strategic Risk Register.	
77.16	**Finance & Resources Committee - Chairs Update** The Committee Chair provided a verbal update of the items covered at the last meeting of the Committee that had included: • Health & Safety Term 1 Update – the Committee had noted the usual timing of the incidents; Mandatory Training Completion was now at 99.3% • The Committee now receives a report on projects and bids which is useful and provides the Committee with a good oversight • The Staff Survey Action Plan is showing 13 of 17 actions are completed or on track to be completed. The Committee had received an update on the actions that had been rated as Amber.	

	• The usual financial reporting had been received. • The meeting had not included any HR reporting as that is scheduled for the next meeting. • The Committee had considered and reviewed the Financial Regulations and the new Financial Strategy, noting that the intent of College Management is to have a strategy in place for each of the 7 Strategic Themes, and were happy to recommend for Corporation approval. *A Governor challenged the H&S reporting for Term 1 incidents and questioned whether Management are now anticipating incidents at a particular time of year as opposed to doing something to reduce the number of incidents?* In response, the Chair of Finance & Resources Committee assured the Corporation that this is addressed at the meeting and reporting on the incidents has improved. The Vice Principal Student Experience and Support confirmed that the areas reporting the incidents now have Health & Safety Champions who are monitoring the area and working on improved reporting. Pre-empting accidents is discussed at induction, as is near misses. The College Health & Safety Manager had taken assurance from the improvements initiated by those areas.	
77.17a	**Financial Regulations** The Corporation was asked to approve regulations on the recommendation of the Finance & Resources Committee. The Committee had found that the revisions were self-explanatory and encompassed the things that “must be done” to ensure compliance. The Corporation APPROVED the Financial Regulations.	
77.17b	**Financial Strategy** The Corporation was asked to approve strategy on the recommendation of the Finance & Resources Committee. The Committee were assured that the strategy replaced the previous version and ensured compliance with current guidance and the FEC Benchmarks. The Corporation APPROVED the Financial Strategy. ***ELT, Staff Governors, and Student Governors withdrew from the meeting. The Vice Principal Finance & Corporate Operations (VPFCO) remained in attendance, and the meeting moved to item 77.24 on the Confidential Agenda.*** ***Following item 77.24, the Vice Principal Finance & Corporate Operations withdrew from the meeting*, and the meeting returned to the main agenda at item 77.18**	
77.18	**Governance & Search Committee - Chairs Update** The Chair provided an update and confirmed that the meeting had covered the following items: • The 121 Governor Feedback Report, which would now be circulated • Governor Recruitment • Board Structures	

	• Student Governor Recruitment Process • Governor Training • Governor Attendance • External Board Review • Revised dates for the 26/27 Governance calendar	
77.19	**Student Governor Recruitment 26/27** The Corporation APPROVED the recommendation of the Governance & Search Committee to move to an interview process for Student Governors. *A Governor requested that some form of nomination be included within the process.*	
77.20	**Governance Calendar 26/27** The Corporation APPROVED the 26/27 Governance Calendar on the recommendation of the Governance & Search Committee.	
77.21	**External Board Review Of Governance** The Corporation APPROVED the recommendation of the Governance & Search Committee to appoint the AoC as the reviewer for the next Board Review.	
77.22	**Review of meeting effectiveness & reflections** The Corporation reflected on the effectiveness of the meeting, considering whether there was sufficient challenge and if the appropriate level of assurance was provided for Governors and noted: • Papers were concise and focused • The pack was easy to navigate • Useful discussion had taken place for several items • Where there had been challenge, it had been constructive The Governance Professional would pick up with the Student Governors about engagement at the meeting.	
77.23	**Any Other Business** *A Governor questioned whether Ofsted had suggested that there needed to be a Lead Governor for Skills.* The Principal confirmed that there was no requirement for a Lead Governor for Skills.	